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ABSTRACT

Three program models, developed for use by agencies and groups wishing to create or expand social services for youth and families experiencing separation, divorce or remarriage, are described in this manual. The three models are a Family Counseling Model, an Education Model, and a Self-Help Model. The manual contains a discussion of the issues to be considered before implementation of a new program and outlines the steps for assessing the particular needs of a community for the services described in the program models. In addition, guidelines for selecting an appropriate service model after the needs of the community have been assessed are suggested. Detailed information on how to use mass and community media to publicize services, promote awareness of the problems of fragmented families, and help make outreach efforts more effective are also included. Finally, case studies of several existing programs that illustrate some of the approaches used by the models are presented in the appendices. (Author/MP)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I. THE INCIDENCE AND EFFECTS OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE 3

CHAPTER II. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT 9
- Program Initiation 9
  - Gaining community support 10
  - Assessing community needs 10
  - Locating resources 11
  - Recruitment and training 11
- Program Contact 12
- Program Implementation 14

CHAPTER III. NEEDS ASSESSMENT 15
- Purpose of a Needs Assessment 16
- Structure of a Needs Assessment 16
- Step 1: Identifying Relevant Agencies and Individuals 17
- Step 2: Needs Assessment Questions 18
  - Community Demographic Information 18
  - Community Resources 19
  - Indirect Services and Outreach 19
  - Availability of Services 19
  - Coordination and Functioning of Existing Services 20
  - Effectiveness of Existing Services 20
  - Costs of Existing Services 20
  - Funding Sources 21
- Step 3: Data and Information Collection Methods 21
  - Social Indicators 21
  - Key Informant 22
  - Rates-Under-Treatment 23
  - Survey 23
  - Community Forum 24
- Step 4: Data and Information Analysis and Presentation 25
- Step 5: Developing a Reassessment Plan 26
- Shortcuts 27

CHAPTER IV. SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE PROGRAM 29
- Staff Orientation 32
- Target Population 32
- Staffing Requirements 33
- Number of Persons That Can Be Served 34
- Format of the Models 34
- Flexibility of the Models 34
- Appropriate Settings for Implementation 35
- Appeal to Clients/Participants 35
- Needed Resources 36

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

Page

CHAPTER V. PROGRAM MODELS 39
THE FAMILY COUNSELING MODEL 41
Overview 41
Rationale 41
The Preventive Orientation 42
The Family as the Unit of Treatment 43
The Time-Limited Treatment 43
The Focus of Treatment 44
THE FAMILY COUNSELING MODEL FOR DIVORCE 45
Goals and Objectives 45
Goals 45
Objectives 46
Child-Centered Objectives 46
Relationship-Centered Objectives 47
Parent-Centered Objectives 47
Target Population 47
Selection Criteria 48
Content 50
The Focus of Treatment 50
Stance of the Therapist 51
Intervention Techniques 51
Format 55
Participants in the Therapy 55
Length of Therapy 55
Entry into Service 56
Stages of Therapy 56
Staffing Qualifications 60
Appropriate Settings for Implementation 60
THE FAMILY COUNSELING MODEL FOR REMARRIAGE 61
Goals and Objectives 61
Goals 61
Objectives 61
Target Population and Selection Criteria 61
Format 62
Participants in the Therapy 62
Length of Therapy 63
Stages of Therapy 63
Content 64
Staff Qualifications 69
Appropriate Settings for Implementation 70
Additional Readings in Family Therapy 70
References 73
THE EDUCATIONAL MODEL 75
Overview 75
Why an Educational Approach? 76
Goals and Objectives 78
Target Population 80

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

Page

- Separated/Divorced Parents Program 81
  - Selection Criteria 81
  - Initial Interview 81
  - Format 82
- The Problem Identification Phase 85
- Group Discussion Phase 85
  - Role of the Group Leader 87
- Skill-Training Phase 87
  - Recommended Format of the Educational Model for Separated/Divorced Adults 90
  - Content 90
- Youth and Children of Divorce Program 92
  - Selection Criteria 92
  - Initial Interview 92
  - Format 93
  - Recommended Format of the Educational Model for Children and Youth of Separation/Divorce 95
  - Content 95
- Separated/Divorced Families: Program Considerations 96
- Remarried Parents Program 97
  - Selection Criteria 97
  - Initial Interview 99
  - Format 99
  - Recommended Format of the Educational Model for Remarried Parents 100
  - Content 101
- Children and Youth of Remarriage Program 102
  - Selection Criteria 102
  - Initial Interview 102
  - Format 103
  - Content 104
- Remarried Families: Program Considerations 104
- Staff Qualifications 106
- Appropriate Settings for Implementation 107
  - Schools 107
  - Community-Based Youth and Family Programs--Runaway Youth Shelters 108
  - Community Mental Health Centers 108
  - Other Possible Locations 108
- Additional Readings for Educational Programs 110
- References 113

SELF-HELP MODEL 115

- Overview 115
- Why Self-Help? 116
- Goals and Objectives 118
- Target Population 119
- Role of the Facilitator 120
  - Planning and Implementation 122
  - Facilitation 123

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

Page

Divorced Parents Groups 126
  Selection Criteria 126
  Format 126
  Content 130
Groups for Youth in Transitional Families 132
  Selection Criteria 132
  Format 133
  Content 135
Remarried Parents Groups 136
  Selection Criteria 136
  Format 137
  Content 138
Staff Qualifications 139
Appropriate Settings for Implementation 139
Additional Reading on Self Help 141
Reference 142

CHAPTER VI. EVALUATION 143
Step 1: Identification and Formulation of Evaluation Goals and Questions 144
Program Initiation 146
  Effort 146
  Effectiveness 147
  Efficiency 148
Program Contact 148
  Effort 148
  Effectiveness 149
  Efficiency 149
Program Implementation 149
  Effort 149
  Effectiveness 150
  Efficiency 150
Step 2: Establishing the Evaluation Research Design 151
Step 3: Identification of Needed Resources to Conduct the Evaluation 155
Step 4: Develop/Adapt/Select Appropriate Data Collection Instruments and Procedures 156
  Client Satisfaction Questionnaires 159
  Goal Attainment Scaling 160
Step 5: Data Collection and Management 163
Step 6: Organize, Analyze and Interpret the Data 163
Step 7: Report the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations 164
Potential Problems in Evaluating Divorce/Remarriage Programs 166
Insiders or Outsiders: Who Should Conduct the Evaluation? 168

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

Page

APPENDICES 171
1. Resources for Children and Parents 173
2. Public Relations Manual 195
3. Divorce and Mourning Project, Marin County, California 207
4. Center for Children in Family Crisis, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 225
5. Families of Divorce Workshop Agenda, Topeka, Kansas 243
6. Curriculum for Understanding Family Change Program, Minneapolis, Minnesota 255
7. Stepfamily Foundation of California 263
8. The Divorced Kids Group, Lexington, Massachusetts 265
9. Single Parent Action Network, Long Island, New York 267
10. Instruments 279
    - Established Measurement Instruments 279
        - Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale 279
        - The Family Coping Inventory 280
        - Straus Conflict Tactics Scale 281
        - The Family Environment Scale 282
        - Post Separation/Post Divorce Problems and Stress Scale 283
        - The Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory 284
    - Psychometric Properties: Reliability and Validity 285
    - Client Satisfaction Questionnaire 287
    - Sample General Background Information Forms 290
11. Programs Visited 297

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to assist agencies and groups wishing to create or expand services for youth and families experiencing separation, divorce, and remarriage. It was prepared as part of a study funded by the Youth Development Bureau (within the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families) to identify and develop innovative strategies to meet the social and emotional needs of these youth and families. A major aim of the study was to identify the needs of this target group, the existing local and federal programs attempting to meet these needs, services still lacking, and information gaps in the relevant literature. Three generic program models, identified and developed in the study, are described in this manual. These include a Family Counseling Model, an Educational Model, and a Self-Help Model. These models were developed from three major sources: information obtained during site visits to thirteen programs across the country dealing with the problems associated with divorce and remarriage, a comprehensive search of the literature, and a review by a panel of experts on divorce and remarriage. The assumptions and design of the models reflect the most innovative and effective program strategies identified through these sources.

The dramatic increase in the rates of divorce and remarriage during the last decade was the catalyst for the development of these models. This increase has created an urgent need for traditional and alternative social service agencies to expand their services to affected youth and families. To assist in this important effort, the manual presents guidelines for planning and implementing the three generic program models.

Program planners should find this manual helpful in a number of ways. The manual contains a discussion of the issues to be considered before a new program is implemented. It outlines the steps for assessing the particular needs of a community for the services described in the program models. It identifies the resources needed to implement each model so that an appropriate model can be selected to match the needs of a particular setting. The manual fully delineates the conceptual, operational, and functional components of each model and presents guidelines for agencies wishing to evaluate these models. It also includes detailed information on how to use mass and community media to publicize services, promote awareness of the problems of fragmented families, and to help make outreach efforts more effective. Finally, the manual presents case studies of several existing programs that illustrate some of the approaches used by the models.

Program planners may be interested in obtaining other products developed as part of this study by the American Institutes for Research. These products, which are available from the Youth Development Bureau, include:

- An annotated bibliography on the impact of separation, divorce, and remarriage on youth and families (including the literature describing the social and psychological services available to this population)
- A literature review of variant family forms and of their physical, social, and psychological effects on the individuals involved
- Thirteen case studies of representative programs serving children, youth, and families affected by separation, divorce and remarriage.

This manual was developed with the invaluable assistance of several individuals and organizations. The five members of the Advisory Panel--Robert Weiss, Joan Kelly, Sheila Kessler, Emily Visher, and James Forbes--helped develop the models and carefully reviewed drafts of the manual. The directors, staff and clients of the thirteen programs visited offered important insights into how services are provided in the real world.* Their interest in the study and the time they took from their busy schedules to help with it are gratefully acknowledged. Finally, Darryl Summers and Sheila Morgenstern, project monitors at the Youth Development Bureau, provided valuable support and advice.

Each of the authors was responsible for separate sections of the manual. Joan Druckman developed the Educational Model and the chapters on selecting an appropriate model and evaluating the models. Jude Flagle prepared the Self-Help Model and the chapter on needs assessment. Octave Baker, who served as project director, wrote the Family Counseling Model and the chapter on program development. The authors wish to acknowledge the contribution of Kathleen Camara, who conducted several of the site visits and prepared an earlier draft of the Educational Model.

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*See Appendix 11 for a complete list of the programs visited.

CHAPTER I

THE INCIDENCE AND EFFECTS OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Divorce and remarriage in this country are sizeable and growing phenomena. From 1970 to 1977 the divorce rate in America increased dramatically by 79%. It is projected that over one-third of married people who are now between the ages of 25 and 35 will divorce. Each of these divorces will involve an estimated average of two children. Eighty percent of divorced adults remarry, and 60% of remarriages involve at least one child. Currently, 13% of the nation's children under age 18 are living in a stepfamily.

Both divorce and remarriage generate a number of common and predictable crises for both adults and youth. For adults, separation and divorce mean the loss of an intimate relationship with another human being that may have brought security and comfort, along with its difficulties. These individuals often experience ambivalence, loneliness, guilt, and fear at being on their own again. Conflicts with the ex-spouse may continue to arise despite a final divorce decree. In addition, parents often face the ordeal of having to change their lifestyles within a short period of time. They must make friends, enter the world of the unmarried, adjust to being independent, and perhaps find a new job. The distress of separation, divorce, and remarriage frequently affects the ability of adults to respond consistently and effectively in their parenting roles. In addition, the lack of social and extended family support for parents may increase feelings of isolation and depression and may result, at least temporarily, in an inability to adequately function as a parent.

For children, the separation and divorce of their parents also represents a major social and emotional crisis. Parents often fail to say anything to their children about the impending separation. As a result, children are often confused and bewildered about what is going on and what will be happening to them.

Parents need to explain to the children that they are divorcing each other, not the children, and that both of them will continue to spend time with the children and be available as needed. They also need to emphasize that divorce is not caused by the children, since many children feel responsible for their parents' divorce.

Some children may not react visibly when they are first told of the divorce, and they may convey the impression that they are not disturbed by the event. But it is rarely true that children are unaffected by separation and divorce, and in most cases their sadness, hurt, and anger will come out at some later point.

Divorce reactions of children can include various manifestations of disturbance, such as faltering schoolwork, behavioral problems, nightmares, changed eating habits, bedwetting, wanting to sleep with parents, headaches and other psychosomatic reactions. Children may engage in often futile attempts to reunite their parents by pleas, bribery, threats, tantrums, depressive symptoms or even suicidal gestures. Frequently used as pawns in an ongoing struggle between their parents, children may be torn between parents, leading to profound feelings of anxiety and guilt. In general, it often takes children longer to adjust to the divorce than the parents, partly because the decision is not theirs, and they feel a lack of control, and partly because they are at a more formative stage, when the impact may affect developmental patterns. The suffering of youngsters during this stressful period is additionally difficult because their parents, who are dealing with their own divorce adjustment, simply do not have the emotional resources to provide them with the explanations and support they need.

Custody and visitation problems associated with both divorce and remarriage often threaten the ability of the child to maintain a positive relationship with both parents. Visits with the noncustodial parent can represent and replay all of the feelings of anger, jealousy and rejection that family members initially experience with divorce. The non-custodial parent, typically fathers, often initially find visitation time with their children very awkward, for they are solely responsible for structuring the time and interacting with the children. They often have to learn how to do this effectively, and also how to avoid situations such as the "Santa Claus" trap of always bringing presents for the visit.

An important issue closely related to visitation is the demand made by some parents that their children "make choices" during holidays. Children must often choose which parent, set of parents, or grandparents they will celebrate the holiday with. The burden of the decision can be quite disturbing to the child. In other cases, the child can be used as a scapegoat between feuding parents and has little choice in the matter.

Children of divorced parents frequently complain of being used as a "go-between" among parents, grandparents and friends. This results in feelings of manipulation and exploitation. Children can also feel ashamed of themselves for their disloyal actions yet are afraid of alienating the person who has requested the information or asked the child to carry messages from one parent to another. Occasionally, children will be aware of parental hostilities and manipulate them to their own advantage in order to gain special privileges or presents.

There are also many changes in life-style and household management associated with separation and divorce. It is the paradox of the divorced child's life that she or he gains both more freedom and more responsibility in the single-parent household.

Freedom results from a decrease in the amount of time the single parent is available for supervision. Children may have many "empty hours" at home while the single parent is busy working or socializing. Also, the single parent no longer has a partner to aid in discipline when the need arises. Consequently, children often get less as well as inconsistent discipline.

Children in single-parent households gain rights and responsibilities that resemble those of the adult parent. Often they are responsible not only for chores but also for decision-making in the household. It is not uncommon for the child of the opposite sex of the custodial parent to assume responsibilities that were traditionally assumed by the absent parent. For example, a son living with his custodial mother may do household repairs and yard work, while a daughter living with her custodial father may be responsible for cooking the meals and cleaning the house. This can not only rob the child of "childhood" by making him or her a surrogate partner but can also create additional problems when the parent remarries and the child feels usurped of his or her position and its associated privileges.

Another important issue for families of divorce involves the dating of the divorcing parents. This is typically difficult for both parents and children. Parents have to adjust to the difficulties of trying to meet other single people, while carrying on all the usual adult and parenting responsibilities of their lives. Offspring may have trouble viewing their parents in such roles, particularly when new men or women begin appearing in the house or staying overnight.

The event of remarriage typically generates strong feelings in both parents and children. However, the feelings of adults and children may be different and conflicting. For adults, remarriage is a joyous time as they begin a new relationship believed to bring happiness and comfort. For children, remarriage can represent an additional loss now that the parent must be shared with his or her new spouse.

The development of step-family relationships can be a very difficult process. Children frequently feel emotionally distant from their new step-parents. If the new step-parent is seen as a replacement for the natural parent, grief reactions can become renewed. Jealousy and feelings of displacement can also arise, particularly if the child or youth has been functioning as a "junior partner" in the household. It is also fairly common for children to feel angry about the remarriage because it represents an end to the possibility of the natural parents reuniting. In fact, it is not unusual for children to attempt to break up the new step-couple in a last-ditch effort to reunite the natural parents. Hostile behavior towards the step-parent can also serve to test the natural parent's loyalty.

Relationships with step-siblings also present problematic issues for children of remarriage. Additional children in the household often mean less parental attention for each child. Step-sibling rivalry can be particularly difficult for children who were accustomed to a great deal of parental attention before the divorce and now must share that attention.

In addition to the development of step-family emotional bonds, family members must make adjustments to new family roles, responsibilities and membership. The fact that children essentially become members of two distinct households creates new problems. Very often rules and responsibilities in the two households differ and children must adjust to these differences. Related to this is the confusion regarding multiple role models and the problem of parental identification.

Despite the many problems associated with divorce and remarriage, most family members (and family professionals) would agree that the family change includes some positive aspects. Both parents and children typically experience some relief when the intense marital conflicts leading up to the divorce are over. Few today would argue that a marriage fraught with hostility and conflict should "stay together for the sake of the children." With regard to remarriage, many children are pleased to know that their parents are beginning a new marriage and feel relieved of the responsibilities of a single-parent child.

In general, all families experiencing divorce and remarriage face a number of problems that challenge even the most adaptive and healthy families. As a result, the need for services available to families undergoing such change has become increasingly evident.

The need for therapeutic, educational and supportive services for families undergoing separation, divorce, and remarriage cannot be overstated. The nature of the individual and family crisis associated with such family change demands resources that generally extend beyond those possessed by individual family members. Effective programs can not only help family members adjust to the immediacy of the crisis but could also prevent long-standing individual and relationship problems that might be perpetuated across the life cycle and transmitted across generations.

The multiple effects of divorce and remarriage problems are felt throughout American society. Such problems are manifest in decreased productivity and absenteeism from work, drug and alcohol abuse, and increased reliance on court services and public welfare. Until effective programs and services are provided to families experiencing divorce and remarriage, the burdens and costs of family problems will continue to rise and be felt not only by individual family members but also by our society in general.

Although assistance to such families has grown over the past few years, the need for programs and services has not yet been adequately met. The intervention models identified and developed in this study represent an attempt to further meet this need. In effect, these efforts are aimed at the promotion of constructive and beneficial individual, family, and societal change.

CHAPTER II

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The program development process can be divided into three separate, but interrelated, stages: initiation, contact, and implementation.* Within the framework of these stages, this chapter outlines the tasks that must be performed to effectively implement the models, discusses the issues associated with each task, and describes some common developmental problems and possible solutions reported by participants in the AIR study.

Program initiation refers to that stage in which all the planning and preparations are made before the program recipients receive the services. It involves gaining legitimacy in the community, determining a need for the program, and identifying the target group. Also included in this stage are the tasks of securing funding and of recruiting or training the staff for the program. Program contact, the second stage of program development, involves recruiting potential clients for the service, identifying the barriers to effective service delivery, and locating community resources that can aid the program. Program implementation begins when the program has achieved the objectives of the first two stages. In this final stage, the program delivers its services with the aim of achieving its overall goals. This stage may involve developing procedures for the termination of clients, resolving service delivery problems, and assessing the relevancy and effectiveness of the services. These three stages of program development are discussed below in terms of the common problems, tasks, and issues associated with each of them.

Program Initiation

A number of common start-up tasks must be performed in the program initiation stage. Program planners must gain the support of both the professional community and the general public. They must involve community groups in the assessment of needs. They must locate funding sources. Finally, they must hire and train staff.

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* Tripodi, T., Fellin, P., & Epstein, I. Social Program Evaluation. Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock, 1971.

Gaining community support. Since program development is a political process, planners must act within the political context of the community. They must establish collaborative relations with community groups and institutions to solicit their ideas and to gain their support for the proposed services. These groups and institutions include community mental health centers, social service agencies, clergymen and priests, pediatricians, teachers, school counselors, professional associations of children and youth workers, and lay groups. It is also particularly important for program planners to work with the courts and with lawyers through legal associations because it is the legal community that is often the first to come into ctonact with divorcing families. Because these groups and institutions frequently come into contact with youth and families experiencing family change, they can assist program planners in several ways. They can help assess the particular needs of a community, provide political clout, and refer clients when the service is operating. But first they may need to be made more aware of the specific problems faced by children and parents experiencing marital disruption and of the kinds of services they need. This awareness can be generated through one-to-one discussions, formal presentations to community and professional groups, and mass media articles and appearances.

The proposed services should be presented as being a resource for community agencies and a complement to their efforts. In this way, program planners can neutralize possible opposition based on fears of competition. Additionally, in view of the necessity for working closely with a variety of community groups and agencies, it helps for program planners to be well-known and trusted individuals within the community.

Assessing community needs. The assessment of needs in the community for the models described in this manual is an important step in the program initiation stage. The success of a needs assessment rests in part on the collaborative relations established through efforts at involving the community in the planning of services. Both professional and lay groups should be asked to participate in the needs assessment effort so that a variety of perspectives on the problem can be attained. Chapter III of this manual provides a full discussion of the rationale for a needs assessment and offers guidelines for the collection and interpretation of the data needed for this effort. Chapter IV presents guidelines for selecting an appropriate service model after the needs of the community have been assessed.

Locating resources. In developing a program, the need for additional funds should be determined. It should be noted, however, that not all new services require additional funds. Many services can be developed jointly with other human service agencies. This collaboration can take the form of sharing staff, facilities, and inservice training opportunities. But in case additional funds are needed, program planners can charge a fee for the service,solicit monies from funding sources, or do both.

Charging a fee for the services provided, however, may present problems. Because families undergoing divorce may experience financial problems both during the divorce process and after, charging a fee may limit the number of clients seeking the service. It may also cause those who do come in to wait until their situation has reached crisis proportions. Even when a sliding fee scale is used, there may be problems since husbands, who usually have higher income, are assessed a larger fee than are their wives. This fee system may lead to resistance among the men to become involved in the service and to resentment if and when they do become involved since men are generally believed to resist seeking help in the first place. An additional difficulty with charging fees is that medical insurance often does not cover the cost of preventive services, and, therefore, third party payments are not usually available to cover the cost of services.

Obtaining support from funding agencies may be problematic as well. It is often difficult to convince these agencies of the need for preventive services, such as the ones described in the models. Particularly, in the wake of the "taxpayer revolt," these funding agencies may prefer to fund only what they consider to be essential services, i.e., services to the most severely distrubed segments of the community. The problem is compounded by the fact that program planners usually cannot demonstrate the effectiveness of preventive services. This situation, however, is changing as federal agencies and private funding services begin to recognize the value of preventive services and to fund demonstration projects.

Recruitment and Training. Program planners may find it difficult to locate staff with background and expereince in working with youth and families in transition. However, given the current economic conditions, a well publicized job opening should attract numerous applicants capable of being trained to work with this target group.

The materials contained in this manual and the other products developed by AIR should prove useful for training, since they are among the first to be developed specifically for providing services to the target youth and families. Training should be eclectic and comprehensive. Its focus should be not only on the specific components of the three models presented in this manual but also on the general principles of the preventive approach in mental health. Staff should be encouraged during training to focus on the healthy functioning of the client and not to simply search for pathology. Their emphasis in treating clients should be on identifying the healthy coping abilities of the clients and their adaptation to family change. The aim underlying the models is not to make "patients" out of divorcing youth and parents but to consider them as ordinary individuals who are dealing with a stressful transition in their lives.

Program Contact

The major tasks of the program contact state involve recruiting potential clients for the service and identifying the barriers to effective service delivery. Most programs participating in the AIR study reported that public relations and outreach efforts were critical to the successful performance of these tasks. Since models are designed to help all families dealing with divorce and not just those families experiencing severe problems, it is necessary to educate the public both about the nature and the availability of services. To this end, the program staff should make presentations on television and radio and before groups of educators and parents. In general, the staff should try to convey the message that their services are directed toward all families undergoing the crisis of divorce and that divorce does pose special risks for the children involved. A major purpose of these presentations should prevent the negative labelling and stigmatization often associated with seeking help from mental health agency. Program planners will probably find that efforts are needed to ensure success of their programs, since the population of those going through divorce is an everchanging one. (See Appendix 2 for guidelines for effective public public relations efforts.)

Outreach to other professionals is also important. These professionals include teachers, school psychologists, pediatricians, and, perhaps most important, lawyers who specialize in matrimonial law. It is often these professionals who, in the course of their work, are the first to come into contact with families that are experiencing stress as a result of marital dissolution. Therefore, they need to be aware of the services available to these families so they can make appropriate referrals.

A major problem that staff may encounter in working with other mental health professionals is that these professionals may not be familiar with the concept of preventive services. They are often more accustomed to dealing with individuals only after they have already exhibited identifiable symptoms of mental disorder. Therefore, they may refer severely disturbed individuals to the program simply because they had at some point in their life expereinced a divorce. In general, the problem can be alleviated by carefully explaining the program to persons in the mental health system so that they understand that individuals with long-standing mental health problems are not the focus of the new service. In keeping with the preventive approach, the program models focus on nonclinical divorcing populations who are not necessarily showing symptoms of the stress associated with divorcing process.

In recruiting clients, program planners must pay particular attention to those segments of the community that have traditionally been underserved by health and social welfare services agencies. The great majority of the programs in the AIR study served an exclusively white, middle or upper middle class population. Only a few of the programs included a significant number of black or other ethnic minority individuals among their clientele. This finding is particularly ironic in view of the fact that blacks and Spanish-speaking groups tend to have higher rates of separation and divorce than do whites. But it is consistent with the findings of numerous studies that blacks and other ethnic minorities generally underutilize social and physical health facilities. An important first step in reaching these underserved groups is to make sure that minority staff are available to do outreach work.

Program Implementation

The specific tasks that must be dealt with in program implementation stage include developing procedures for terminating clients, handling staff burnout and assessing the effectiveness of the services.

Program planners should be aware of the need for organizing the flow of clients through the program, particularly if they are implementing the Family Counseling Model. Because the therapy conducted in this model should be limited to ten to twelve sessions, program planners should be careful to develop criteria for termination and to make sure that staff are actually using these criteria. Otherwise the danger exists that the treatment could become long-term and thus limit staff time available for new clients.

Staff burnout is another issue that should be of concern to program planners. Staff who work directly only with clients involved in family transition may find their caseload quite demanding and emotionally draining. To solve this problem, staff should have a variety of other responsibilities, such as outreach and administrative duties. However, this solution necessitates the training of enough staff members to ensure that all cases can be handled. It is important also to provide opportunities, including both formal and informal meetings, for staff to support each other and to deal collectively with the stresses often generated by their work. Continual in-service training can help alleviate some stress.

Finally, at this stage it is a good idea to formally evaluate the achievement of the program's overall goals and to modify the program accordingly. It is also valuable at his time to reassess the needs for the program.

The following chapter outlines the steps involved in conducting a needs assessment, and Chapter VI discusses program evaluation.

CHAPTER III

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Conducting a needs assessment to determine available and needed services is the first step in developing an effective service delivery system. It should therefore precede the implementation of the three models described in this manual. This chapter presents the reasons for conducting a needs assessment, lists questions relating to community needs and existing services that should be considered in program planning, and describes various methods that can be used to collect information to answer these questions. Also included are suggestions concerning how this information can be used to formulate program objectives and content.

A needs assessment involves collecting information from both professionals and lay persons regarding the number, content, and adequacy of available services, gaps in service, and community needs that are not being met by these services. This information is then used to determine the goals, content, and target population of new services.

Often in the past needs assessments were conducted in an informal or haphazard fashion. As a result, many new programs duplicated the content of established ones, or they addressed the relevant problems from the professional or practitioner point of view, but not from the viewpoint of those most in need of services. Many funding sources now require that a needs assessment be conducted in order to determine the relevance and applicability of the proposed service. However, whether or not a needs assessment is required, it is a procedure that is essential in order for a program to address community needs on a priority basis and to do so in a manner that complements, rather than duplicates, the available services in a community.

Accordingly, in planning services for children, youth, and families affected by marital disruption, a needs assessment is a valuable tool. This procedure determines the portion of the community most in need of these services, as well as the kind of service that can most effectively

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Portions of this chapter have been adapted from Planning and implementing child abuse and neglect service programs: The experience of eleven demonstration projects. Berkeley Planning Associates, for the National Center for Health Services Research, Health Resources Administration, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1977.

fulfill the needs of the intended service recipients. In addition, through conducting a needs assessment, program staff become familiar with related resources and services currently offered by the community and can lay the groundwork for coordination of services and referral networks.

Purpose of a Needs Assessment

There are a number of reasons for conducting a needs assessment as a first step in initiating a new program or modifying an existing one:

- to assure that a new service addresses those people and problems most in need of help;
- to determine the adequacy and effectiveness of existing programs and services intended for the target population;
- to determine gaps in service that a new program could fill, or to determine duplication of services by different programs;
- to ensure that decisions about a new program are based on the needs of the population, rather than simply on professional opinion or perception, political influence, or staff expertise;
- to establish communication with other social services and professionals (e.g., counselors, lawyers, psychiatrists, teachers) that will facilitate coordination between services and referrals;
- to collect information that can be used later as a baseline against which to compare and evaluate program progress and success; and
- to facilitate funding of a program, since most funding sources require proof of need for a particular service before funds are allocated.

Structure of a Needs Assessment

A needs assessment consists essentially of five steps:

(1) identifying agencies and individuals in the community that provide services to the target group;

(2) asking questions, the answers to which will reveal the extent to which the program is needed and for whom in the community the program would be most beneficial;

(3) using various methods to collect the data necessary to answer these questions;

(4) analyzing the resulting information and presenting it in a coherent fashion to all those involved in setting program objectives; and

(5) developing a plan for future systematic reassessments in order to monitor changes in the service system and community needs and to adapt program goals and content accordingly.

The following is designed primarily to assist programs in conducting Steps 2 and 3 described above, which constitute the backbone of a needs assessment. Although some guidelines will be included to assist programs in making initial contacts, analyzing data, and formulating program objectives, the focus of this discussion is on providing programs with relevant needs assessment questions, and data collection methods for answering these questions.

Step 1: Identifying Relevant Agencies and Individuals

Although few formal programs for the divorced and remarried may exist in a particular community, it is likely that many social services and individuals regularly come into contact with youth and parents undergoing marital disruption. It is useful to identify and get in touch with these people for several reasons: (1) they will be interested in hearing about the proposed program and will feel involved in the planning process; (2) since the program will be community-based, it is essential to involve as much of the community as possible in the planning and ongoing activities of the program; (3) there should be an initial contact to inform them that their input about divorce and remarriage-related problems within the community would be very useful and appreciated in upcoming needs assessment activities; and (4) this initial contact lays the groundwork for future service coordination and mutual referral efforts. Making such contacts in person or by telephone rather than through letters or announcements, although more time-consuming, will in the long run yield better results. Relevant agencies and persons include community mental health centers, child guidance centers, marriage and family counseling services, youth shelters, psychologists, school guidance counselors, social workers, lawyers, and clergymen. It would be helpful to get in touch with Parents Without Partners and other self-help groups for the divorced and remarried. When contacting these persons and agencies, it is useful to ask them to identify any lay persons in the target population (for example, clients or former clients) whose opinions would also be helpful. It is essential that program staff involve as many in the target population as possible as part of a needs assessment to obtain their viewpoints about needed services. These initial contacts with lay persons can pave the way for their later involvement, and they will likely know of other persons in the target population who could also provide input for needs assessment. Some lay persons may even want to be involved in actual needs assessment activities (e.g., data collection, interviewing).

It is possible that some professionals or agencies may find a needs assessment threatening, since it involves collecting information about the nature and effectiveness of their services. During this initial contact phase, the purpose of the needs assessment can be explained to these individuals. If their participation is solicited in a sensitive manner, and their value in needs assessment and other program planning activities is stressed, it is likely that little resistance will be encountered.

Step 2: Needs Assessment Questions

The questions asked in a needs assessment determine the kinds of information that should be collected from various sources, including the persons and agencies contacted in Step 1 where relevant. After these initial contacts have been made, staff should formulate the questions that need to be asked to determine target population needs and the extent of available services. The following illustrates the kinds of questions that should be asked in a thorough needs assessment. Some of these may not be relevant to a particular community. Program staff will probably think of other questions that are more relevant to a particular community's characteristics and services.

Community Demographic Information

(1) What are the geographic boundaries of the community or of the area the program intends to serve?

(2) What are the urban/rural characteristics of the intended service area?

(3) What are the marriage, separation, divorce, and remarriage rates in this area?

(4) What are the economic and ethnic characteristics of various areas within the community (perhaps by census tract)?

Community Resources

(1) What and how many agencies or individuals in the intended service area currently provide some service to divorced or remarried parents, or youth undergoing family transition?

(2) What proportion of time do these individuals and agencies devote specifically to these services?

(3) What are the specific services offered (e.g., family or individual crisis counseling, long-term therapy, educational programs, self-help groups), and who benefits from them (consider type of family change, age groups, minorities served, and socioeconomic status of clients)?

Indirect Services and Outreach

(1) What outreach activities are conducted by the above services (e.g., lectures, seminars, and other professional and public education activities, open meetings, workshops, professional panels, preparation of articles and other written materials for professionals or lay persons)?

(2) To what extent do available services seek and share information among each other?

(3) What collaborative efforts exist among services (e.g., referral networks, shared staff, affiliated programs and other liaisons, consulting)?

(4) In what ways do services make use of the media and written materials to inform the public of programs?

(5) What part of the target population is most likely to learn of these services through outreach efforts?

Availability of Services

(1) Approximately how many clients receive the available services?

(2) Are services accessible to clients in terms of location, hours, and public transportation?

(3) Is the atmosphere in which these services are offered helping and non-stigmatizing?

(4) Are services available in sufficient quantity (consider waiting lists, caseload size and mix, restrictions on eligibility)?

Coordination and Functioning of Existing Services

(1) Is there duplication among services for the divorced and remarried?

(2) Have any formal agreements between agencies or individuals providing services been developed?

(3) What gaps exist in the current service system (i.e., who is not being served, or what services are not being provided)?

Effectiveness of Existing Services

(1) Have evaluations of services been conducted (either by those offering the service or an outside source) and what do they reveal about the effectiveness of services or client satisfaction?

(2) What are problems with or gaps in current service as perceived by providers?

(3) What are the problems with or gaps in existing services as perceived by clients, former clients, or other members of the target population?

(4) What are problems with or gaps in existing services as perceived by those familiar with the target population but not providing any specific counseling, educational, or self-help services (for example, teachers, lawyers, physicians, guidance counselors)?

(5) Are community residents and professionals in general aware of the problems associated with divorce and remarriage and the available services that address them?

Costs of Existing Services

(1) What covers the costs of services currently available (e.g., government and private funding, client fees, general agency funds)?

(2) What is the average cost per client served for each of these services?

(3) What are the least and most costly services?

(4) Is any portion of the target population in effect denied service because of high client fees?

(5) How do costs of services for the divorced and remarried compare with those of other social services in the community?

Funding Sources

(1) What funding sources are available for this kind of service (federal, state, local, private)?

(2) What are the ceilings placed on the funds available from these sources?

Step 3: Data and Information Collection Methods

Structured methods must be employed to collect the data and information necessary to answer the preceding questions. Most of these methods can be implemented by staff or trained non-professionals with relatively little cost. They can be used to collect data about community characteristics, needs of the intended population, and services available from both professionals and lay persons. Some of these methods entail the creation of specific data collection instruments that can be tailored to meet individual program needs.

Social Indicators

The social indicators approach yields statistics that are useful in determining certain population characteristics in a particular community. Programs should attempt to determine the separation, divorce, and remarriage rates; number of children or youth involved; minority and socioeconomic status of divorced and remarried families for their particular community or the domain covered by their program. These statistics will assist programs in determining what portion of the community population should be focused upon.

These types of data can possibly be obtained from the Bureau of Census, County Health Departments' studies of community census tracts, population surveys (that may be city or county sponsored), state planning agencies, community mental health centers, or large local colleges or universities that may have collected this type of data for research projects. It is recommended that programs check with local library reference personnel to determine where this information can most likely be obtained.

In addition, NIMH's Mental Health Demographic Profile System presents profiles on the standard catchment areas in the United States. Although the information contained in this system has been abstracted from 1970 Census Bureau Data, the system should contain updated information by 1981. The computer tapes that contain this data are available from state departments or divisions of mental health.

Once these data have been collected they should be presented in ways that will ultimately be of greatest use to programs. Since program decisions about needs of the community should never be based solely on statistics, these data should be coordinated with the information yielded by other needs assessment techniques.

Key Informant

The key informant approach is a method that collects information from those who are in a position to know what the intended target population's needs and utilization patterns are. Clinical staff in local mental health agencies, mental health professionals in private practice, lawyers, clergymen, teachers, and school guidance counselors would be appropriate key informants for programs to contact. These are presumably the persons who were contacted in Stage 1. The key informant approach involves the creation of a questionnaire or interview schedule that permits the collection of comparable information from key informants. Personal (face-to-face) or telephone interviews and mailed questionnaires are the vehicles by which this data can be obtained. Face-to-face interviews are generally the most successful because they permit a free exchange of ideas and generally yield the highest response rate. They are also useful because they continue the kind of personal communication with professionals that will facilitate future services coordination and referral liaisons. A combination of personal and telephone interviews may prove most efficient and equally effective.

Questionnaires or interview forms should be created with specific needs assessment questions in mind. The questions should be open-ended (i.e., not entailing structured, predetermined responses such as "yes", "no", "often", "never", etc.) in order to collect as much information and as many opinions as possible.

Rates-Under-Treatment

This method also involves contacting mental health professionals with experience in treating divorce or remarriage related problems. It involves the collection of numerical information concerning how many persons have been seen by professionals for these problems, characteristics of clients (age, sex, family status, ethnic identification, socioeconomic status, and place of residence), the presenting problems for which clients seek help, the frequency and duration of the care/treatment process, and the source of referral.

If staff conducting the needs assessment are affiliated with a larger mental health agency, a logical place to begin the search for this information is within the agency. This and other agencies will likely have some of these data in records kept for audit and funding purposes. If not, individual client records can be reviewed. Program staff should develop a worksheet that lists those items (cited above) for which information should be collected.

The initial contacts made during Step I will facilitate interactions with the agencies and individuals that should be contacted. Since client records are confidential, either a method of reviewing records that does not reveal client names or any identifying information must be employed, or the records must be reviewed by the professional who dealt with the client. In either case, the cooperation of professionals must be enlisted.

After these data have been collected they can be summarized by use of a calculator and presented in tabular form. These data should then be discussed during a staff meeting.

Survey

The survey approach involves collecting data from (a representative sample of) persons in the community, or from professionals who provide mental health services. Programs can use this approach to determine how many people in the community who have experienced marital disruption . (1) have used any sort of mental health intervention to assist them through the crisis, (2) would like to have used such a service but knew of none available, (3) were or are not interested in such interventions. Professionals can be surveyed to determine (1) if they (or their agency) offer any services to the divorced or remarried, (2) if so, what portion of this population they focus upon (age, sex, marital status, minorities, socioeconomic status of most clients), and (3) what specific services are offered. The survey method is important because it is the only method that assesses the needs of a large number of laypersons from their point of view.

As many relevant persons (both lay and professionals) as possible should be surveyed. As with the key informant approach, a questionnaire or interview schedule must be constructed (the professional and lay populations will require different instruments) and administered by mail, telephone, or face-to-face.

In using this method, cost is a consideration since surveys can be quite expensive. Both face-to-face and telephone interviews are expensive because of the staff time involved or because of the cost of hiring, training, and paying interviewers. Mailed questionnaires are the least costly approach, but these inevitably yield the lowest response rate. One possible alternative may be to mail out questionnaires and to follow up with a phone call those persons who have not responded within a week or two.

Questionnaire or interview schedules should be designed to permit simple data tabulation and analysis. Questions should be structured in such a way that responses are fixed, and the list of alternative responses should be included in the instrument.

Community Forum

The community forum approach is similar to the key informant method, except that in this case information and recommendations are sought from the general public. This method is a way of bringing interested individuals together so that they can share knowledge, opinions, and insights.

The program should plan the forum for a time that is convenient for the target population. Both youth and parents should be encouraged to attend. Invitations can be extended through use of the media (radio, television, and newspaper announcements) and through strategically placed notices in the community (e.g., high schools, community centers, churches, and shopping centers). In the notice, programs should announce that they are interested in setting up services for divorced and remarried youth, parents, or families, and want to find out what kind of services would be most helpful. It may be more useful to plan a number of strategically located small meetings rather than one large meeting, since the purpose of the meeting is to produce an open interchange of ideas.

During meetings it will be necessary to record the ideas, attitudes, and perceptions of those present. This information should be as comprehensive as possible and precede a summary of the needs as expressed by the target population as represented in these meetings.

The data yielded by these five methods will provide programs with information about the needs of the divorced and remarried as perceived by service providers and members of this population. Based on the information derived from these methods, program staff can proceed to set objectives and design services.

Step 4: Data and Information Analysis and Presentation

Once the data and information have been collected by the preceding methods, they must be analyzed and presented to staff and other relevant individuals in a concise and efficient manner. The numerical and statistical data collected by the social indicators, rates-under-treatment, and survey methods may require computer analysis. Staff may want to hire a consultant for this task, or send the data to a computer processing business. Although computer use is costly, it is far more efficient than collating the data by hand or training staff to program the data, and it is in the long run likely to be the least expensive way to handle large amounts of data. Once the data have been analyzed, they can be presented in a chart or table format.

Results obtained by the key informant and community forum approaches generally represent opinions and subjective information from professionals and lay persons. For this reason, they are much harder to analyze since value judgments are likewise necessary to establish their importance. However, the responses can be collated and presented in a report form.

The results of the entire information and data collection process can be presented in a meeting that includes staff, and possibly the professionals and lay persons who provided information. It is possible that information will not always be complete, and some may be of questionable validity. The purposes of the meeting will be to present the findings, attempt to reconcile any discrepancies or information gaps, and establish priorities regarding the target population and service needs indicated by the data and information. Value judgments will be a necessary part of this process. Structured or formal group techniques may be helpful in directing the discussion and prioritizing needs.

Once community needs have been determined, staff will be in a position to select those needs that can be reasonably addressed, given program resources and staff training. The objectives that the new program will seek to achieve can then be formulated and documented.

Data obtained from the entire needs assessment should be summarized in a final report that also includes recommendations derived from the information collected and possibly the resulting program objectives. This report can later be used in program evaluation (since the report details the baseline data against which a program can assess its impact), as well as for funding purposes. Everyone involved in the needs assessment process (initial contacts, other key informants and lay persons who provided information) should receive a copy or a summary of this report for two reasons: those who took part in the process will naturally want to know the outcomes of the needs assessment; and, by sharing the report, program staff will encourage good working relationships with persons who participated in the needs assessment. This gesture will continue to facilitate coordination among services and a cooperative community spirit.

Step 5: Developing a Reassessment Plan

It is necessary to periodically reassess needs in the community, as well as the types and effectiveness of existing services. Community characteristics and needs change over time, and new services begin while others end. A program should be knowledgeable about these changes, as they bear directly on its relevance and effectiveness. Also, the impact of the program will be reflected in these reassessments (for this reason, it may be useful to conduct reassessments in conjunction with evaluation efforts).

Staff can use reassessment results to design needed changes in program content, or restructure program objectives when necessary.

Shortcuts

While it seems that a needs assessment may be difficult, costly, and time-consuming, it should never be allowed to grow into an enormous research effort. Steps and shortcuts can be taken to maximize efficiency while maintaining quality and comprehensiveness. In lieu of an exhaustive records review (rates-under-treatment), estimates can be solicited from key informants, or a representative number of records can be reviewed and results generalized. It may also be possible to obtain student or volunteer assistance in collecting data and information, thereby minimizing expenses and staff time. Finally, questionnaires do exist that can be adapted for interviewing key informants and conducting surveys, thereby saving time involved in questionnaire construction. Literature exists that details aspects of needs assessment such as questionnaire design, and data analysis and presentation. A sample of such sources is included on the following page.

FURTHER READING: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Attkisson, C. C., Hargreaves, W. A., & Horowitz, M. J. *Evaluation of human service programs*. New York: Academic Press, 1978.

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Hagedorn, H. J., Beck, K. J., Neubert, S. F., & Werlin, S. H. *A working manual of simple program evaluation techniques for community mental health centers*. Rockville, Maryland: National Institute of Mental Health, 1976.

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CHAPTER IV

SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE PROGRAM

This chapter provides a brief description of each model. It also identifies nine considerations an agency or group could use to select an appropriate program for their setting.

The three identified and developed models include the Family Counseling Model, the Educational Model, and the Self-Help Model. Each Model, while employing different methods, is designed to achieve the following general goals:

- to reduce the psychological distress of all family members;
- to improve the social functioning of all family members;
- to improve parenting skills and competencies; and
- to help family members cope with issues specific to divorce and remarriage.

The Family Counseling Model is designed to provide short-term, child-focused family counseling for children, youth and families undergoing the crisis of separation, divorce and remarriage. It is an eclectic model which uses a variety of concepts and techniques, from individual and family systems approaches to brief therapy. It is also a pragmatic, problem-oriented approach that focuses on the specific, idiosyncratic concerns of each particular family.

The Educational Model is a short-term instructional approach that provides information and skills to parents, youth, and children experiencing separation, divorce, and remarriage. It uses structured "classroom" experiences to improve parenting and family functioning. Both a didactic and experiential component are included.

The Self-Help Model is a peer support group where participants share experiences, receive support, and provide practical assistance to others in similar family situations. The primary activity is informal discussions offered at regular and convenient times. Other features include outside activities planned by participants and the development and maintenance of resource and referral centers.

It should be kept in mind that the three models represent ideal types. In other words, they have the essential features of an approach from which helping professionals from various settings can pattern and design their own individual programs.

The decision to adopt a particular model should be based on a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of each model. Some general considerations are presented below.

The Family Counseling Model seems best suited for those persons who need or desire individualized attention, including those who are experiencing more severe difficulties or those who simply prefer the privacy of therapy sessions. This Model may be easily incorporated into existing private practices or community mental health centers that devote considerable time and resources to individual and family counseling.

An important consideration for the Family Counseling Model is that highly trained staff are necessary to conduct the counseling. Consequently, a Family Counseling program can be rather costly to implement. Also, clinicians often require case consultation and supervision which incur additional expenses. A disadvantage of the Family Counseling Model is that many persons are intimidated by personal counseling and the perceived or actual stigma associated with such mental health care.

The Educational Model has the advantage of reaching a large number of people at once. As a result, it is more economical than the Family Counseling Model. While the Educational Model also requires a trained staff, it can take advantage of paraprofessionals to conduct discussion sections.

Another advantage of the Educational Model is that it is flexible. It can be offered in a variety of formats ranging from an hour-long seminar to an eight-week series of sessions, thus serving a wide range of persons with varying time and resource constraints. The Educational approach also appeals to those persons who are threatened by personal counseling. Finally, the Educational Model relies upon a group of people. Some persons may find that they must wait before participating in a program because there are few others who are also interested in joining an educational program at that time.

The Self-Help Model has many of the same advantages and disadvantages of the Educational Model. The Self-Help Model can also reach a broad base of persons who are in need of help but who are reluctant to seek personal or family counseling. Like the Educational Model, the Self-Help Model is more economical than the Family Counseling approach. Self-Help groups do not depend upon continuous professional input and therefore do not incur the high cost of clinician's time and supervision/ consultation. The Self-Help Model also uses a group format that reaches a larger number of persons. This is generally more economical than treating family members on an individual basis.

Like the Educational Model, the Self-Help Model provides individuals with the opportunity to share and compare their personal experiences with others who are currently facing similar life situations.

There are some disadvantages to the Self-Help Model. First, this approach may not meet the needs of those who are in a great deal of personal stress. Second, the Self-Help group generally operates without ongoing professional leadership. Third, because the Self-Help group depends upon its members for its continuation, it demands considerable time from participants.

Another important consideration involves choosing the model that matches the stated interests of the service recipients. Although an agency or group may determine that a need exists for a particular model, it is also possible that this perception of need is not shared by the target population. For this reason, a needs assessment (see Chapter III) should be conducted before initiating or implementing one of the three models.

In general, each model has advantages which must be weighed against its disadvantages. To aid in this process, the following nine areas should be considered:

- Staff orientation
- Target population
- Staffing requirements
- Number of clients that can be served
- Format of the Models
- Flexibility of the Models
- Settings for implementation

- Appeal to clients/participants
- Needed resources

Each of these considerations will now be briefly discussed.

Staff Orientation

Because the models were designed to be very general, it is expected that each one can be adapted to suit a variety of conceptual and methodological orientations. There are some limitations, however. The Family Counseling and Educational models are short-term approaches. Therefore, long-term strategies would not be compatible with these models. On the other hand, the Self-Help Model is suited to both long-term and short-term intervention.

All three models have a preventive focus. Therefore, traditional psychopathological orientations would not be appropriate. In addition, all three models advocate working with both parents and children (either together in some form or separately). Therefore, a conceptual orientation which presupposes working with only the parent or with only the child may not make full use of the models. Despite the fact that some theoretical orientations may be inappropriate or that others may lend themselves most readily to a particular model, we believe that the models are quite flexible and can accommodate most psychoeducational theories.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, agencies or groups will probably choose the model that best reflects their own ideological orientations and biases. Some agencies or groups clearly regard counseling as the most effective approach to working with families of divorce or remarriage. Other agencies might prefer to invest their time and effort in educational programs. Still other agencies may strongly believe in the Self-Help movement and will thus be most attracted to the Self-Help Model.

Target Population

The decision to implement one of the models might include a consideration of the target population. The Family Counseling Model is most appropriate for families in need of individualized, intensive treatment. The Educational Model, while it may be of benefit to persons who could be best served by counseling, is most appropriate for those who do not need an individualized approach. It best serves persons who are open and able to learn specific ideas and skills that, if applied, can be personally useful.

The Self-Help Model may work best with those persons who are most in need of peer support and who are able and willing to share their experiences with and learn from others. This model may be particularly useful for, but not limited to, those who have passed the initial family crisis and need assistance in coping with the everyday, ongoing problems of their family situation.

Staffing Requirements

The Family Counseling Model has the most stringent staff requirements and qualifications. It is expected that the counselor have training and competency in individual, child, and family therapy, brief therapy, crisis intervention, and behavior modification. In addition, the counselor should have additional training in child and family development and in the areas of separation, divorce, and remarriage. The counselor should preferably possess an advanced degree in the applied social or behavioral sciences.

The Educational Model recommends male-female leader teams. This might involve two professionals or one professional and one paraprofessional. The use of paraprofessionals, while less costly, would necessitate professional supervision. As in the Family Counseling Model, the professional leader for the Educational Model should have an advanced degree in the applied social or behavioral sciences as well as specialized training in divorce and remarriage. Training and experience with groups is also recommended.

Although there are no specific educational requirements for a person interested in developing a Self-Help group, the model recommends that the leader have personal or work experience or training in group facilitation and in the area of divorce and remarriage. The Self-Help Model is thus the least costly of all the approaches because it does not necessarily depend upon continuous professional leadership.

In addition to the leader, each model program needs a staff person to organize and administer its implementation. This could range from a full-time administrator to a volunteer organizer. Of course, the larger the program (regardless of which model is employed), the more administrative support is needed.

Number of Persons That Can Be Served

It is clear that the Educational and Self-Help Models are able to serve many more persons than can the Family Counseling Model. This is primarily because the Educational and Self-Help approaches involve group, rather than individual, sessions.

Format of the Models

The Family Counseling Model involves two to three months of weekly or biweekly sessions. Sessions ideally consist of all important family members as a whole or in various combinations. The Educational Model can take a variety of formats ranging from a one-time one-hour intensive seminar to eight to ten weekly sessions. Ten to twelve persons attend each session. Each session involves three phases: a problem identification phase, a group discussion phase, and a skill training phase. Finally, the Self-Help Model is a group of eight to ten persons that meet weekly for either a limited or unlimited time period. The primary activity involves discussion and sharing of ideas and feelings.

Flexibility of the Models

Because the Family Counseling Model requires the presence of all family members, it has less flexibility than the other two models. In addition, the Family Counseling Model has a much more defined format than do the other two models.

In contrast, the Educational and Self-Help Models can assume a variety of formats while still maintaining the basic structure of the model. In addition, both the Educational and Self-Help models can serve as supporting programs to more intensive counseling or they can operate independently.

Finally, the Family Counseling Model is most restricted with regard to appropriate settings. Educational and Self-Help programs can generally be implemented in a variety of sites and are thus more flexible with regard to meeting time and place.

Appropriate Settings for Implementation

These three models are generally designed to be conducted in a variety of institutional and community settings, although, as stated above, the Family Counseling approach is most limited in this regard. The Educational and Self-Help models, however, are particularly able to be implemented in many different settings. The Family Counseling Model can best be implemented by an established mental health facility or by private practitioners. The Educational and Self-Help Models can be implemented in such settings as community/neighborhood centers, private business facilities, churches, schools, runaway youth shelters and community mental health centers. In addition, the Self-Help Model can be conducted in private homes.

Appeal to Clients/Participants

Each model may appeal to people for many and various reasons. The Family Counseling Model might be particularly attractive to persons who find group settings uncomfortable. It may also appeal to those who prefer or require the kind of undivided attention offered in personal counseling sessions. However, some persons might feel threatened by the stigma associated with mental health counseling. Even with the most skillful public relations campaign against such stigmatization and negative stereotyping, the concern with being a "patient" may deter some persons from seeking or receiving family counseling.

Because education does not carry the stigma of mental health care, an educational approach can reach a large population of both parents and children who would not otherwise be served by traditional psychological health care settings. However, some people might not be attracted to an educational program because it cannot provide an individualized, in-depth exploration of personal issues. The relatively structured and predefined curriculum can restrict both the scope and depth of discussed topics. As a result, Educational group members may not get the "answer" they seek to particular problems they are experiencing.

The fact that the Self-Help group relies minimally upon professional input can be attractive to many who are suspicious of or threatened by professionalism in the mental health field. In a sense, the Self-Help Model offers a grass-roots, relaxed atmosphere which may more closely approximate natural settings than either of the other two models. However, as with an Educational group, the needs of the Self-Help group as a whole will outweigh the needs of the individual. If an individual group member has an ongoing and severe problem, the group may not be able to provide the attention nor skill necessary for helping that individual.

One strong appeal of Self-Help programs is the possible development of an immediate "community" that understands and shares the problems of the individual member. In fact, this is the hallmark of Self-Help groups and, as such, offers tremendous potential for developing ongoing friendships and informal support networks.

Needed Resources

The final consideration involves the resources needed to implement each model. One must consider both professional and material resources. Professional resources are perhaps most critical in the Family Counseling Model, with the Self-Help Model being least dependent on continued professional input.

Material resources are perhaps most important in the Educational Model. Classroom space, movable chairs, and a blackboard are important. In addition, one needs access to copying machines, paper and reading materials. Few appropriate curriculum materials have been developed or disseminated. Thus much staff time may be needed to develop and refine curricula. This is particularly true in the area of remarriage, where books, articles, films, and other instructional materials are scarce.

The Self-Help Model does not demand material resources, but they are viewed as very desirable. For example, although it is not essential that a Self-Help group develop or maintain a resource center containing relevant divorce or remarriage materials, it would be very useful for Self-Help group members if such a facility were available.

All three models require a meeting place. The Self-Help Model can range from meeting in an established community facility to meeting in private homes. As a result, it is quite flexible and does not necessarily demand costly office space. On the other hand, the Family Counseling Model requires private office space which can be quite expensive. As mentioned before, the Education Model requires a flexible, relaxed and well-equipped "classroom" setting. In many cases, churches and schools are willing to donate a classroom for such purposes.

In summary, all three models have unique characteristics that can be either advantageous or disadvantageous. In general, the final choice of any one model should be based upon a careful consideration of staff interest, available resources, and expressed need.

CHAPTER V

PROGRAM MODELS

The Family Counseling Model

The Education Model

The Self-Help Model

THE FAMILY COUNSELING MODEL

Overview

The Family Counseling Model is designed to provide short-term, preventive counseling for children, youth, and families undergoing the crises of separation, divorce and remarriage. The Model presents separate intervention strategies for those families experiencing divorce and for those families experiencing remarriage. With regard to divorced families, the counseling preferably takes place as soon after the physical separation or divorce of the parents as possible. The goal of this service is to minimize the short and long term effects of the divorce on children and youth by restoring parental capacities that are frequently diminished at the time of divorce and by assisting children and youth in the difficult post-divorce adjustment period so that their adaptive capacities are maintained and psychological harm is prevented. This Model is particularly appropriate for families with children that are at high psychological risk. Such families include those with a high level of conflict as reflected in lengthy litigation over custody or visitation issues and those where the children have been left in the custody of a disturbed parent.

As for remarriage, the Model is designed to enhance the functioning and psychological well-being of all individuals in a remarried family situation. Services are provided to spouses, couples, children and families. The Model also provides for the inclusion of ex-spouses and other extended family members who may have an impact on the remarried family. The therapeutic strategies employed in the Model are based on family therapy, insight-oriented individual therapy and behavior modification techniques when appropriate. In some cases, a team approach is used so that extended family members may be more easily engaged in the therapeutic process.

Rationale

The Family Counseling Model is eclectic, employing a variety of intervention strategies from both individual and family-systems approaches to brief therapy. The Model stresses a pragmatic, problem-oriented approach to treatment that focuses on the individual, specific, idiosyncratic problems and concerns of the family. Consequently, the Model is designed to meet the particular needs of each family and its individual members and is therefore appropriate for families considered to be at high psychic risk due to divorce or remarriage. In keeping with its eclectic nature, the model has adopted elements from a variety of existing services, including the Divorce and Mourning Project (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1979; see Appendix 3 for a complete description of this project); the Children and Family Divorce Counseling Service (San Francisco Children's Hospital); the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic; and the Brief Therapy Center at the Mental Research Institute (Weakland, Fisch, Watzlawick, and Bodin, 1974); and the Remarried Consultation Service in New York City. In addition, the Model is based on a review of the literature on separation, divorce and remarriage and on comments provided by a panel of experts on marriage and the family.

Two fundamental assumptions underlie the Model's perspective on the nature of human problems and their effective resolution (Weakland et al., 1974). The first assumption is that the problems usually presented to therapists are maintained only if they are repeatedly reinforced by the current behavior of the client and by the ongoing social interaction between the client and other significant persons such as family members. The second assumption is that human problems can be resolved most effectively by changing the behavior that maintains them, regardless of the nature, origin and duration of the specific problem. In keeping with these assumptions the Model focuses on observable behavioral interaction in the present and on active attempts to change elements in the client's social context that maintain the problematic behaviors.

The Model may be further defined by its preventive orientation; its focus on the family as the appropriate unit of treatment; its time-limited treatment; and its focus on a circumscribed set of problems.

The Preventive Orientation

The Family Counseling Model is primarily preventive in orientation and assumes that parents and children respond better to a strategy that places emphasis on healthy functioning and coping rather than on pathology. Based in part on crisis intervention concepts, the Model stresses early intervention to alleviate the adverse effects of divorce and remarriage on children and families. Families undergoing such crises are assumed to be more amenable to change as a result of the distress and disequilibrium experienced by all family members. Thus, intervention as soon after the family crisis as possible is emphasized because it may lead to maximum gains with minimum efforts.

The Family as the Unit of Treatment

The Model focuses on understanding and solving the client's presenting problems within the context of the family. The intervention techniques used in the Model are predicated on the thesis that the behavioral and emotional problems associated with divorce and remarriage are often the consequence of a dysfunctional family system. Of course, it is acknowledged that divorce and remarriage per se may lead to significant problems for the children and adults involved. But the persistence and exacerbation of these problems can best be understood in terms of some system of relationships and problem maintaining behavior involving the family or other significant persons. For example, a child's problem behavior may be part of a marital struggle even if the parents are divorced. More generally, problems may arise from a number of elements in the family system, including inappropriate definitions of who is included in the family; poor articulation and management of generational boundaries; and failure of the parents to achieve an emotional divorce.

The Time-Limited Treatment

The number of sessions is limited to a maximum of ten to twelve in most cases. This time limitation is in keeping with current philosophies of brief treatment that accept relatively limited goals and objectives as consistent with the patient's needs and as the treatment of choice. This view holds that time-limited treatment can achieve significant goals related to the client's major complaints and that the setting of a maximum number of sessions helps establish a positive expectation of rapid change. In addition, the time-limitation ensures that a larger number of persons in need will have access to the treatment.

The Focus of Treatment

Delimiting the scope of the treatment and maintaining the focus on a relatively circumscribed set of problems are important aspects of the approach suggested here. In the case of post-divorce counseling, the focus is on divorce-specific issues, particularly the parent-child relationships and how they have been affected by the marital disruption. With remarriage counseling, the focus has more scope, but still the emphasis is on identifying a concrete problem to work on. In both cases, the task of the therapist is to formulate a concrete, specific behavioral statement of the problem and to state the goals of therapy in terms of this formulation. The assumption is that change can be achieved most easily if the goals are reasonably modest and clearly formulated. Once the client experiences a modest but definite change in the presenting problem, the experience leads to further self-induced change in the specific problem and also in other areas of his or her life (Weakland et al., 1974).

THE FAMILY COUNSELING MODEL FOR DIVORCE

Goals and Objectives

Goals

The overarching goals of the interventions described in this Model are to enhance the well-being of all family members, particularly children, and to improve the quality of family functioning after the divorce. The more specific goals of the service can be categorized as those pertaining to (1) the children and youth, (2) the parents, and (3) the family as a unit.

Goals for Children and Youth

- to avert the development of psychopathology due to parental separation and divorce;
- to assist children in coping with their grief and to equip them to understand their emotional reactions to the parental divorce;
- to assist children in achieving a realistic understanding of the parental divorce;
- to help children acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for problem-solving in relation to specific situations that arise from the divorce experience

Goals for Parents

- to help the parents adjust to their divorce and to maintain their ability to function as competent adults while continuing to parent effectively;
- to explore the common problems and needs of children of divorce;
- to assist the parents in sharing their feelings about and reactions to the separation and divorce with their children;
- to facilitate the emotional divorce of the parents;
- to help parents to communicate effectively with each other about general child-related issues;
- to facilitate the adults' transition to the single-parent role

Goals for the Family

- to alter family interaction patterns that maintain problematic behavior;

- to set mutually agreed upon goals with regard to the well-being of the children;
- to redefine the family roles so that the noncustodial parent can continue to function as a parent

Objectives

The specific objectives of the intervention can be categorized as child-centered, relationship-centered, or parent-centered. Child-centered objectives focus on the child, the explanation of the child's needs to the parents, and the use of "particular techniques to change behavior or alleviate distress" (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1977). Relationship-centered objectives focus on elements in the parent-child relationship or in the parent-parent relationship that interfere with the child's adjustment to divorce. Parent-centered objectives emphasize the transition of the parents to the single-parent role. The three categories of objectives are presented in detail below.

Child-Centered Objectives

- to help the parents understand the age-appropriate responses of their children to divorce and to manage the children's reactions to divorce in a constructive manner;
- to help the parents provide critical child-relevant information to the children about the separation/divorce;
- to teach the parents how to listen and respond effectively to the children's needs, feelings, and concerns following the divorce decision;
- to assist the parents in establishing and implementing concrete, realistic visitation and custody arrangements that take into account the needs of the child;
- to help the parents set up and maintain stable post-divorce routines and plans for their children;
- to help the parents develop and maintain support systems for their children (e.g., supportive relations with friends, relatives, and teachers);
- to assist the parents in sharing with their children their feelings about and reactions to the separation and divorce;
- to ensure the consistent and continuing involvement of the non-custodial parent in the lives of the children;

- to help the children recognize and deal with their emotional reactions to the parental divorce;
- to increase the children's feelings of security by providing a social support system in the context of therapy and outside of the therapy

Relationship-Centered Objectives

- to help the parents avoid involving the children in parental disputes and conflicts;
- to encourage the parents to work collaboratively on designing visitation arrangements;
- to help parents communicate with each other about general child-related issues;
- to clarify generational boundaries to reduce the process of role reversal, whereby the children begin to take responsibility for the care of the parent(s)

Parent-Centered Objectives

- to help parents (particularly the custodial parent) learn how to reduce stress and effectively manage resources and time;
- to help the custodial parent draw on social and other resources for support;
- to help parents establish new social and sexual relationships;
- to help parents relate newly established social and sexual relationships to their children;
- to help the parents develop a future orientation for starting a new life as a single adult

Target Population

Although this Model is designed to meet the need of all families in the general divorcing population, it is particularly suitable for families in which the children are at high psychic risk due to special circumstances. Perhaps the most important category of children and youth at risk are those whose parents are engaged in litigation around issues of custody and visitation. Research and clinical experience have shown that these families tend to experience high levels of stress and that parental interaction in these families tends to be less civil and rational than in nondisputing families. As a result of these high levels of conflict and stress, the capacties of the parents tend to be more diminished than would ordinarily be the case.

Other children at high risk are those characterized by the following circumstances:

- The custodial parent is seriously impaired because of mental illness, alcoholism or drug addiction.
- The child has very limited contact with the non-custodial parent.
- The divorce or separation has resulted in severe economic distress.
- An only child is involved (Only children appear to be more vulnerable to the stresses of divorce, perhaps because they lack the protective cushion provided by other siblings [Kelly and Wallerstein, 1977]).

The Family Counseling Model is assumed to be more effective than other interventions with such families because it provides an in-depth understanding of individual and family dynamics; this understanding allows the therapist to conduct intensive child-focused work. In contrast to the Education Model, the therapist can also directly observe the child as well as the parent-child interaction. The intervention is tailored to meet the idiosyncratic needs of the particular family and, hence, is assumed to be more effective than are other approaches to working with high risk children.

Selection Criteria

Families should be eligible to participate in the service if the parents are physically separated and firmly committed to filing for a divorce. Experience has shown that the physical separation of the parents is a necessary condition for the success of a child-focused program such as the one provided by this Model because it is often difficult to help the children accept and understand the divorce if the parents are still living together (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1977). The firm intent of the parents to file for a divorce is also critical; in the absence of such an intent the therapist may find that marital or family therapy is more appropriate for the situation than is divorce counseling. Although some post divorce counseling services require the parents to have actually filed for a divorce, this is not advised for two reasons. First, such a requirement may serve as an obstacle to lower socioeconomic families using the service because they may tend to avoid the legal system entirely. Second, filing for divorce may be an inappropriate stipulation for treatment since in some states (e.g., Pennsylvania) filing for divorce does not take place for one, two or even three years after the separation.* Such a delay in treatment would prevent early intervention in the crisis situation and thus minimize the chances for a successful outcome.

Families should be eligible for the service if the physical separation has taken place within two years prior to their entry into the service. However, families that have experienced a divorce before two years of their seeking the service may be treated if they are still attempting to resolve issues associated with the divorce. Nevertheless, therapists intervening after this time period may find that it is too late to have an impact on the family decision-making, family functioning, and parent-child relationships. Moreover, families who seek help this long after the parental separation probably do so for problems that have little to do with the separation or divorce per se. Ideally, families who enter treatment for divorce-specific problems do so within six months of the separation.

Another requirement for participating in the service should be that parents sign a statement that the counseling sessions will not be used in any ongoing or future court proceedings. This confidentiality safeguard is essential to protect the integrity of the counseling relationship. With this kind of arrangement, parents are more likely to discuss their concerns and problems with the therapist openly, since they will not be motivated to "look good" in the event that the therapist is called into court as an expert witness in the divorce proceedings.

Still another eligibility requirement should be that no child in the family have a chronic history of disturbance. In such cases, the child is most likely suffering from a long-standing problem that is unrelated to the parental divorce per se. Families should also be excluded from the service if the custodial parent is overtly psychotic, since he or she is in need of more intensive long-term treatment. However, parents that are moderately disturbed should be eligible for the service. With these parents, a circumscribed intervention around divorce-specific issues is still feasible and, indeed, desirable. Of course, such individuals should be strongly encouraged to seek assistance elsewhere for their long-standing problems of adjustment. Agencies wishing to implement this Model should, therefore, be familiar with the full range of social and psychological services in the community so that they can make appropriate referrals.

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*These considerations draw on material in a personal communication from the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic.

Content

The Focus of Treatment

The focus of the Family Counseling Model for Divorce is on a relatively circumscribed set of issues that are often problematic in separated and divorced families. The different but interrelated foci of the Model are presented below.

- The parent-child relationship(s) are the central focus of the treatment, since the major goal of the Model is to enhance parenting so as to facilitate the child's adjustment to the divorce. The relationship between the parents becomes the focus only when it affects the parent's capacity to fulfill his or her parental roles. By focusing on children's needs and parenting issues as distinct from marital issues, the Model helps parents to resolve custody/visitation disputes and other divorce-specific issues. The resolution of these issues, in turn, can lead to increased feelings of confidence and self-esteem on the part of parents, thus indirectly helping them to deal with their own problems in adjusting to the separation/divorce.

- The focus is also on divorce-specific issues. The therapist does not attempt to resolve any long-standing problems of the parent. Intervention into the parents' adjustment is appropriate only insofar as it aims to enhance the parenting functioning.

- The focus is limited to the current crisis. The therapist directs the attention of the family to the current situation and how it affects the child's adjustment to the divorce. Exploration of traumatic events in the childhood of the parents, for example, is usually inappropriate.

- The focus is on the healthy aspects of the families' functioning. The therapist attempts to identify and expand on the areas of health shown by the family. The aim is to identify and enhance the strengths and skills in the family rather than to search for pathology.

Stance of the Therapist

The therapist assumes an active, empathic role to establish a rapid working relationship with the client that will fully exploit the limited time available. This approach is in contrast to the passive, reflective stance often assumed by the therapist in more traditional psychotherapy. The active therapist engages the family members in a process of problem solving that is directed toward resolving the concrete problems they are currently experiencing.

Intervention Techniques

The intervention strategies used in the Model range from those that are primarily educational in nature to those that are predominantly clinical. As indicated earlier, the strategies draw from several therapeutic modalities, including family therapy, crisis intervention, and behavior modification. Like the objectives discussed earlier, the intervention strategies can be conceptualized as primarily child-centered, relationship-centered, and parent-centered (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1977).

Child-centered interventions. As previously mentioned, child-centered interventions deal primarily with the child's needs and how the parents understand and respond to these needs. For the most part, these interventions are educational in nature. They can involve work with either the parents or the child(ren). With the parents, perhaps the most common educational intervention is explaining to them how divorce typically affects children of different ages and how children's reactions might be managed. Another important task is helping parents to tell the children about the divorce in age-appropriate terms. Other topics that lend themselves to an educational approach include: how to allow children to carry on a productive relationship with the non-custodial parent; how to establish a realistic and satisfactory visitation plan; how to help the child deal with his or her grief and sense of loss; and how to establish security and stability for the children without encouraging overdependency.

A variety of educational approaches may be used in helping parents deal with these issues. These approaches include simple advice giving, the assignment of relevant reading about divorce and child development, discussion of divorce-related information, the practice of new skills and approaches with children, training in communication skills, and training in social learning techniques. Though all these approaches focus on the child's adjustment to divorce, they also serve to increase the parent's self-esteem and sense of competence by enhancing his or her ability to function in the parental role.

As for therapeutic interventions with the children themselves, the treatment of choice depends on the developmental stage of the children. In general, direct work with the children is most effective when they are of school-age or older. Pre-school children have been found to benefit most from interventions with the parents, as described above. With early latency-age children, who typically experience considerable difficulty discussing the parental divorce directly, the therapists may effectively use the technique of the "divorce monologue", as described by Kelly and Wallerstein (1977). This technique enables the child to express his or her feelings about the divorce while maintaining the necessary psychological distance. It involves the therapist's relating to the child how children of similar ages typically react to the divorce of the parents. When appropriate, the therapist may tailor the monologue to address the unique needs and situation of the particular child. With older children, the therapist may intervene by offering support and reassurance while directly focusing on issues of concern to the child. These issues may concern relations with the parents, loyalty conflicts, concerns with caretaking and visitation arrangements, ways of explaining the divorce to their friends, understanding their parents' emotional reactions to the divorce, and the child's belief that he or she is responsible for resolving conflicts between the parents.

Relationship-centered interventions. Relationship-centered interventions aim to modify the unhealthy interaction patterns between parents and children as well as those within the family that interfere with children's adjusting to the parental divorce. Although these interventions may employ educational techniques, they generally go beyond simply providing information to the family members. In keeping with the eclectic nature of the family counseling model, the relationship-centered interventions draw on methods from insight-oriented therapy and family therapy. Presented below are examples of typical problems associated with divorce and how relationship-centered interventions may be applied to resolve them.

Insight-oriented intervention. Custodial mothers of school-age children sometimes find that they are being coerced and manipulated by children in an attempt to sabotage their reentry into a new social life and force a return to the marriage (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1977). Mothers in this situation often are immobilized in their efforts to correct it because of guilt and low self-esteem. An example of this kind of family situation is presented by Wallerstein and Kelly (1977):

> Mrs. V. complained that she was harassed and victimized by her ten-year-old daughter, Alice, who was controlling her and her household. She felt that she would have to discontinue her very limited social life because Alice made her feel so guilty. She would have liked to be firmer, but had always been afraid to be so. Alice was openly pressing for a reconciliation between her parents. This caused the mother to waver, because she agreed that children need two parents. At the same time, she recalled bitterly that her husband abused her physically over the years and inveterately gambled away their savings.

The intervention strategies employed reflected a combination of dynamic approaches and simple support from the therapist. The strategies included the following components: "(a) an explanation of the underlying dynamics of the child's behavior to the parent; (b) continued and appropriately timed interpretations of the parent's internal conflicts and consequent immobilization and difficulty in exercising proper parental function; and (c) supporting the painful, slow beginning efforts of the parent to move to regain parenting capacity and to curb the youngster's destructive and self-destructive behavior" (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1977).

Family therapy intervention. Another problem often faced by families of divorce is a confusion of generational boundaries that can result in "the parentification process" whereby the children take responsibility for meeting the needs of the parents that have been frustrated by the marital dissolution. In such families, the parents usually experience enormous dependency needs and have minimal skill in getting these needs met. Because of loyalty conflicts the children may advocate the position of one parent against that of the other and become so entangled in the parental conflict that they are unable to proceed with their developmental tasks. Often the non-custodial parent is extruded from the family and unable to play his role as a parent. The therapeutic tasks in these families are to (1) redefine the family as including all members; (2) clarify generational boundaries to reduce "the parentification process"; (3) encourage the parents to take active parental roles; (4) help each of the parents to reestablish relations with each child; and (5) facilitate an emotional divorce between the parents (Goldman and Coane, 1977). A similar approach to working with divorced families is presented by Kaplan (1977).

Parent-centered interventions. The primary focus of parent-centered interventions is on the individual needs of the parents as they make the transition to the single-parent role. The transition to the single-parent role can be facilitated by encouraging the development of needed work or social skills. Kressel and Deutsch (1977) report that experienced marriage and family therapists encourage the development of social skills in the following manner:

> I make very specific suggestions: "Who are your friends? Do you have friends who give parties? How about a political club? How about going to church?" I'm very specific about pushing them out into the world, because if they don't get out into the world they're going to continue to feel the loss and abandonment and resentment of their spouse; and when they bump against their own real world outside, the separation and loss of the spouse ceases. (p. 440)

Other interventions may involve the following activities on the part of the therapist:

- offering general support with aim of reassuring the parents that they can effectively cope with the divorce situation;
- encouraging specific behaviors that the parents have found effective in coping with the divorce crisis;
- helping parents understand their emotional reactions to the divorce by explaining how adults typically respond to marital disruption;
- helping parents distinguish their needs from those of their children;
- teaching the parents, particularly the custodial parent, relaxation techniques (Bellak and Small, 1978, p. 119) and methods of effectively using time and resources.

As indicated earlier, groups for single parents may also provide the social support necessary for reentry into social life. Such groups are discussed fully in the Self-Help Model.

Format

Participants in the Therapy

The Family Counseling Model encourages the therapist to see all members of the divorcing family individually and in various combinations. During the initial information gathering interviews, each parent may be seen individually and the children may be seen as a group. Another option for the initial interview is that of seeing the noncustodial parent individually and the custodial parent together with the children. Later, the therapist may see each child alone, the custodial parent and the children together, the noncustodial parent and the children together, the siblings together, the two parents together, the two parents alone, or the family as a whole. This approach to treatment is based on the assumption that seeing only each family member individually does not allow the therapist to observe family interactions, particularly parent-child interactions, and that such observations are essential if the therapist is to gain an understanding of the impact of divorce on the family and to formulate an appropriate intervention strategy. The therapist must exercise considerable care in selecting which family members are to be seen jointly. Seeing a dissolved family together, for example, may tend to encourage the parents and the children to think that the family can, in fact, be reunited. Similarly, seeing the parents together may lead one of them to expect and ask for marital counseling, while the other may simply wish assistance in solving certain logistical problems associated with the divorce.

Length of Therapy

The therapy occurs over a two- to three-month period of weekly or biweekly sessions. The families may be asked to return for a follow-up interview approximately six months after the end of the treatment to assess the adjustment of their children.

Entry into Service

Clients may initiate contact with the service by calling for information and scheduling an appointment if they think the services are appropriate for them. During the initial telephone interview, the intake worker briefly explains the service to the client, screens him or her for eligibility, and gathers a minimal amount of information regarding the demographic characteristics of the client, the referral source, the status of the marriage, the number of children involved and their ages, and the presenting problem (which will usually concern the child's reactions to the divorce). Having collected this information, the worker then schedules the client for an appointment. If only one parent has initiated the contact, the intake worker explains that it is essential for the other parent to also call for an appointment. Although ex-spouses may be reluctant to involve the other parent, they are urged to do so by telling them that the participation of both parents is important for the success of the treatment process.

If a parent does not meet the eligibility requirement because he or she is not physically separated or because the spouses have not filed for divorce, the parent may be seen for a pre-separation consultation. This consultation, which the parent attends without the children, provides assistance with such issues as how to tell the children about the divorce and how to arrange the mechanics of separation and visitation arrangements.

Stages of Therapy

The therapy comprises five stages, although in practice there may be some overlap among these:*

- assessment and problem identification
- the selection of an appropriate treatment plan
- implementation of the treatment plan
- termination
- six-month follow-up.

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*This five-stage schema is adapted from the Children and Family Divorce Counseling Service at Children's Hospital, San Francisco, California

An outline of the sequence through which the therapy progresses as well as the topics taken up in each stage is presented below. The substantive intervention technqiues have been discussed in the Content section of this document.

Assessment and problem identification. This stage involves separate semi-structured interviews with the custodial parent, the non-custodial parent, and the children (who can be interviewed either individually or collectively). The custodial parent may also be interviewed with the children. The general goals of this stage are to establish a relationship with the family and to identify problems in parenting and in the child's or youth's adjustment to the divorce.

The separate interviews with both parents attempt to achieve the following objectives:

- to clarify for the parents the nature and aims of the service;
- to obtain a brief history of the marriage and the events leading up to its dissolution;
- to assess each parent's emotional responses to the divorce;
- to assess the dominant style of family life and interaction;
- to identify specific, concrete problems of concern to the family and the elements in the family maintaining the problem behavior;
- to assess the level of cooperation and animosity between the spouses;
- to assess the current child care arrangements (both visitation and custody);
- to assess the impact of divorce on the parenting roles;
- to assess the sensitivity of the parents to their children's reactions to the divorce and to identify any problems in child management associated with the divorce;
- to assess the degree to which the parents are emotionally divorced;
- to determine the current social and economic situation of each parent;
- to determine what the children have been told about the divorce, how they reacted, and how parents dealt with these reactions.

If the parents have not told their children about the separation or the divorce, they are urged to do so. The therapist tells the parent(s) how to explain the separation to the children in age-appropriate terms. The therapist should also explain that in the absence of information, children will fantasize about the reasons for the divorce, and that these fantasies are often more anxiety-producing than is reality. The therapist may also assist the custodial parent in dealing with any pressing child management problems.

The objectives of the children's interviews are:

- to assess the developmental level of each child;
- to assess the child's cognitive understanding of and emotional response to the divorce;
- to determine the nature of the support systems available to the child (e.g., supportive relationships with siblings, extended family, and teachers);
- to assess the adequacy of the child's coping abilities;
- to identify the development of new behaviors and symptoms in response to the divorce (e.g., depression, psychosomatic reactions, and the like).

The Selection of an Appropriate Treatment Plan (Strategy Conference). The strategy conference is an individual case conference that is convened to formulate a divorce-specific assessment of the family and to develop an intervention plan for working with the family. The counselor assigned to the family presents all of the information collected on the family during the assessment phase of treatment. The conference is attended by all staff working with divorced families and by supervisors and, perhaps, by outside clinical consultants.

The strategy conference aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to assess the impact of divorce on each family member;
- to determine the degree of disruption in the adults' parenting capacities;
- to identify family issues that are most crucial and most amenable to intervention;
- to formulate a treatment plan for working with the family.

Implementation of the Treatment Plan. This phase of therapy involves the implementation of the treatment plan agreed upon in the strategy conference. As mentioned earlier, the family members may be seen in the following combinations:

- the custodial parent and the child(ren)
- children individually and with the custodial parent (this can be done in the same session)
- the children and the non-custodial parent
- the parents together (if appropriate)
- the family together (if appropriate).

If the custodial parent and the children have returned to live with the grandparents, the grandparents may also be seen, either as a couple or with the mother and children. When indicated, the noncustodial parent's new partner may also be seen, but not together with the ex-spouse and the children. In addition, other significant individuals in the extended family may participate in the therapy, if indicated.

The specific objectives of the treatment are presented on page of the Objectives section of this document. The objectives, as already mentioned, can be classified as being child-centered, relationship-centered, or parent-centered.

Termination. At termination of treatment the therapist meets with each parent alone to summarize the current family situation. If the custodial parent (usually the mother) is not prepared to terminate treatment, she is placed in an ongoing group for mothers going through divorce. Both parents are encouraged to call the therapist if they need help before the six-month follow-up meeting.

The following objectives pertain to this stage of therapy:

- to make plans for the six-month follow-up
- to refer parents for further treatment if indicated
- to summarize the situation of the family; to identify strengths and weaknesses in the family; and to anticipate future problems and methods of dealing with them.

Six-Month Follow-Up. The six-month follow-up calls for one session with each parent and one session with the children. It attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- to assess the parent-child relationship with the purpose of identifying improvements, problems, and changes that have resulted from treatment;
- to strengthen problem-solving strategies learned by the family in the third phase of treatment, if necessary;
- to make referrals for continued treatment, if indicated;
- to assure family of the therapist's continued interest in its situation.

Staffing Qualifications

Staff implementing the Family Counseling Model should have training and competencies in the following areas: child and family therapy, brief therapy, crisis intervention, and behavior modification. More specifically, the staff should have training in the area of child development and be familiar with various methods of intervening in parent-child relationships. The staff should also have considerable knowledge regarding the impact of separation and divorce on the social and emotional adjustment of children, youth and families.

In selecting staff to implement the Model, the emphasis should be on demonstrated competencies and experience, rather than on academic qualifications. To be sure, most caregivers wishing to implement the Model will be social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists with graduate degrees. But paraprofessionals and others with less formal training would be qualified to implement the Model if they have had supervised training that resulted in demonstrable skills in working with children, youth and families.

Appropriate Settings for Implementation

The Family Counseling Model can most appropriately be implemented in community mental health centers, mental health clinics, and alternative social service settings. Private practice is also an appropriate setting for implementation. More important than the precise nature of the setting is the presence of staff with the skills and training discussed above. Staff should also be oriented toward brief, problem-focused therapy that accepts relatively limited goals.

THE FAMILY COUNSELING MODEL FOR REMARRIAGE

Goals and Objectives

Goals

Similar to the Family Counseling Model for Divorce, the primary goals of this service are to enhance the well-being of all family members, particularly children, and to improve the quality of family functioning after the remarriage. The more specific goals are as follows:

- to treat the problems of the remarried and their children as well as the problems of the ex-spouse as they relate to the family system;
- to promote the psychological growth of all members in the remarried family;
- to promote an optimal level of cohesiveness in the remarried family;
- to help the remarried family reorganize so that its functioning is enhanced.

Objectives

- to provide psychological and supportive services to all family members;
- to make the services short-term (10 to 12 sessions) and specific to the family problems associated with the remarriage;
- to make the services as preventive as possible by intervening as soon after problems develop as feasible

Target Population and Selection Criteria

The Remarried Family Counseling Model serves individual spouses, couples, children and whole families that are involved in a remarried family situation. The Model may also serve extended family members (such as the ex-spouse) of the remarried family. In other words, the Model is designed to serve (1) all family systems in which at least one of the spouses is a stepparent; and (2) families in which at least one of the spouses has a child by a previous marriage (Visher & Visher, 1979). In serving these individuals and families, the goal is to intervene early in the family before the crisis has reached its peak and before unhealthy interaction patterns have become rigid and unyielding. The Model recognizes, however, that most families served by the Model will have already reached a crisis point when they seek help. According to Dr. Clifford Sager at the Remarriage Consultation Service (RCS),* remarried families delay seeking treatment because they are far more reluctant than other families to admit that problems exist. This reluctance is due in part to their strong desire to have the remarriage work, particularly if they perceive a personal failure in a previous marriage. Hence, they tend to wait until problems reach a crisis point before they seek help.

The Model described here is designed to treat remarried families with a wide variety of presenting problems. Dr. Sager reports that remarried families often seek treatment because of a child-related problem (e.g., truancy, delinquency, rebelliousness, or withdrawal). This acting out on the part of the child is perceived by the staff of RCS as being symptomatic of family problems. The families are described by staff as exhibiting considerable anger or depression when they first come to the Service, again because their problems have reached crisis proportions. Other common presenting problems include conflicts between the husband and wife or with an ex-spouse. Legal and financial issues rarely constitute the presenting problem, according to Dr. Sager.

Format

Participants in the Therapy

The complexity of stepfamily structures calls for a flexible approach in deciding whom to include in the treatment. Visher and Visher (1979) suggest the following subgroupings:

- the stepparent couple;
- all adults who are involved with a particular child (children) (e.g., biological father, biological mother, and the stepparent);
- ex-spouses (separately or together);
- all adults and all children (including natural parents and stepparents);

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*See Appendix 11 for complete address.

- various groupings of adults and children;
- the couple and the children (visiting or living in the household).

The couple is the most common family subgroup seen by the therapist. It is generally advisable to see the couple together before adding other family members to the therapeutic unit because a major goal of the therapy is to strengthen the alliance between the spouses. A strong coalition between the spouses has been found to be an important characteristic of healthy intact families and healthy stepfamilies (Visher & Visher, 1979). If the presenting problem defined by the couple involves a child, the therapist should see the child at least once in order to meet the perceived needs of the couple so that they will continue in treatment. The various issues that the therapist can take up with each of these six subgroups listed above are discussed in detail by Visher and Visher (1979).

Length of Therapy

Although ten to twelve therapeutic sessions over a two or three month period should be appropriate for most remarried families seeking assistance, other options regarding length of treatment should also be considered. In some cases, for example, a few individual sessions with an adult or child will suffice to resolve the presenting problem(s). In other cases, a more extended and family-oriented approach may be necessary to help the family attain an acceptable level of functioning. It goes without saying that in all cases the length and nature of the therapy should be tailored to the unique needs and problems of the particular family.

Stages of Therapy

The stages of therapy follow the same sequence as those discussed in the Family Counseling Model for Divorce except that the six-month follow-up is not included. The issues that are unique in working with stepfamilies at each stage of therapy are discussed briefly below.

Assessment and problem identification. This phase attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- to identify the precise problems, needs, and goals of the family;

- to determine the level of individual and family tension;
- to assess the similarities of the diffdrences between the family systems that have merged to form the remarried family;
- to define and understand the roles of each family member and how these roles differ from those in the original nuclear family;
- to identify needed changes in the alliances and loyalties within the stepfamily;
- to elicit information on stepfamily myths or "skeletons in the closet" that may influence stepfamily functioning.
- to determine the nature of the stepfamily's rules and values.

Selection of an appropriate treatment plan (strategy conference). Like the strategy conference described in the Family Counseling Model for Divorce, this conference is convened to formulate an assessment of the family and to develop an intervention plan for working with the family.

Implementation of treatment plan. The focus of treatment in working with stepparents, stepchildren and stepfamilies is discussed later in the Content section of this document.

Termination. At termination the therapist summarizes with the family the accomplishments of the therapy and also notes any issues that are still unresolved. The family should be encouraged to work on these issues outside of therapy. The family should also be told that they may return for further therapy around these unresolved issues or around newly defined problems. In addition, the family should be advised on how to handle any reoccurrence of their problems. It may be helpful for the family to schedule sessions once every month or two during this stage for purposes of providing support and assistance with problems before the final termination.

Content

As indicated above, the treatment of a stepfamily and its members may involve work with either parent individually, the couple, the children or the entire family. The techniques employed in working with these sub-groupings of the family are similar to those used in other types of individual, marital, child and family therapy. The issues that arise in therapy with stepfamilies, however, may be different because of the psychological and structural differences of stepfamilies. McClenahan (1977) reports that the following problems emerged from her work with groups of stepparents and their spouses:

- discipline of stepchildren
- being viewed by stepchildren as the "bad guy"
- problems with former spouses
- poor marital communication
- general problems with stepchildren.

The structural elements of remarried families that may contribute to these problems are outlined below (Visher & Visher, 1979):

- *There is a biological parent living in another household*. In this situation, an individual removed from the stepfamily household has considerable influence over the stepfamily. A number of problems may result from this arrangement, such as complications in working out plans for the child's birthday, competition between the parents in giving the "best" gift, and problems in determining whether the gift is from the parent or the stepparent.

- *Stepfamily members have experienced the loss of a primary relationship (parent/child and/or spouse)*. Incomplete mourning of this loss may pose problems for the integration of the stepfamily.

- *The relationship between a parent and child is prior to the new couple relationship*. This situation means that the couple may have no time to adjust to each other without the presence of the children. If one adult is joining a parent and a child, he or she may be in the position of an "outsider."

- *Children are usually members of more than one household*. Divided loyalties may ensue from this situation; children may be also used inappropriately as a communication link between the two families.

- *There is no legal relationship between the stepparent and stepchild*. Stepparents may feel that they are "invisible" because they cannot sign teenagers' driving permits, sign for medical treatment, or have other legal rights in connection with their stepchildren.

The nature of the counseling agenda(s) for working with stepfamilies depends on which family subgroup is involved in the therapy: the parents individually, the couple, the children, or the entire family. The following counseling agendas are adopted from Visher and Visher (1979).

The Counseling Agenda for Work with Stepmothers. The usual problems covered in individual work with stepmothers are the following:

- problems related to expectations of instant love of and from stepchildren;
- tendency of stepmothers to rush into the new family situation and come on too strong;
- handling rejection from stepchildren;
- difficulties with the "wicked stepmother" myth;
- unsuccessful attempts to keep everybody happy;
- inability to achieve close family unit;
- anger, jealousy, and competition for love and affection from the spouse;
- anger at ex-spouses;
- guilt generated by all of the above.

The Counseling Agenda for Work with Stepfathers. The following general problem areas represent the salient issues faced by stepfathers:

- joining a functioning family group and establishing a place for himself;
- working out rules regarding family behavior;
- handling realistic expectations both on his part and on the part of the new family;
- dealing with feelings of guilt about his previous family, if he is a father;
- managing money;
- dealing with issues of adoption, naming and inheritance questions with reference to his stepchildren;
- handling sexuality in the stepfamily.

The Counseling Agenda for Work with Stepcouples. The topics generally addressed in working with stepcouples include the following:

- mourning the loss of the dream of a nuclear family
- acceptance of the stepfamily structure and roles
- relationship with ex-spouses

- relationship with in-laws and ex-in-laws
- problems around differing needs and sets of values
- expectations of "instant love"
- dealing with anger and guilt
- jealousy and competition for love and affection
- rejection and insecurity
- difficulties with "cruel stepmother" myth
- need to compensate the children for their past upset
- visiting stepchildren
- adolescent stepchildren
- rivalry between children.

The Counseling Agenda for Work with Stepchildren. The basic problems experienced by stepchildren include the following:

- dealing with loss
- divided loyalties
- answering the question, "Where do I belong?"
- membership in two households
- unreasonable expectations
- fantasies of natural parents reuniting
- guilt over causing the divorce
- adolescent stepchildren (problems with identity and sexuality).

The Counseling Agenda for Work with Stepfamilies. The counseling agenda for working with stepfamilies includes the following issues:

- defining for each family member how they see their problems, what their own needs are and what they would like to change;
- clarifying the similarities and differences of the different family systems that have merged in the formation of the stepfamily;

- clarifying the roles of each family member and how that has changed or evolved through each of the family changes;
- deciding how the family wants to strengthen, dilute or change the existing alliances and loyalties;
- helping the stepfamily dispel the stepfamily myths and offset their effects on the family;
- examining and modifying family rules and value systems;
- working on the logistics of family functioning;
- working on how feelings are expressed within the family.

Although therapy may involve some individual treatment or treatment with subgroupings of the family, it is advisable for the therapist to work towards conjoint family therapy at some point as the preferred method of dealing with many of the problems associated with stepfamilies. Such conjoint family therapy offers several advantages that non-conjoint work does not. For one thing, the conjoint setting enables the therapist to gain firsthand knowledge of how the family dynamics actually operate. For another, the meeting together of the family at the insistence of the parents may reassure all family members that their system is worth working to preserve. Another advantage of family therapy is that the focus of treatment is shifted from any person or subgroup within the family to the family system, thus allowing the identified patient, or "symptom-bearer," to improve (Visher & Visher, 1979).

Thus, the philosophy and focus of the Model reflect a commitment to family therapy, wherein the individual needs and psychology of each family member are considered. The target of all interventions is the family system, although all sessions need not include the entire family. The family system is viewed as comprising interdependent members, whose behavior inevitably affects the entire system. Adolescent problems, for example, are seen as related to general family conflicts. As mentioned earlier, it may first be necessary to see the couple alone in order to strengthen their relationship. Once the family as a whole is brought into treatment, the interactional dynamics are observed, as well as the ways in which the presenting problem affects the troubled family system and vice versa. Therapists may utilize systems, insight, and learning theory methods. Often in therapy it is first necessary to break down the barriers that inhibit effective family communication. Insight therapy may be utilized to discern underlying patterns of motivation which may manifest themselves in, for example, acting-out behavior. Therapy is generally focused on evaluating and changing the interaction dynamics of the family, rather than on the specific presenting problem to the exclusion of other factors (and family members) that may create, magnify or abbreviate it. Behavior modification techniques are sometimes used in this effort by assigning tasks (e.g., to the stepmother: "You make all the family decisions that arise this week"), by creating contractual agreements, or by purposely restructuring family roles for a short time to gauge the effects. Materials such as books, films, and educational seminars or talks may be suggested to families as needed.

As indicated earlier, it is often necessary to separate the family members to focus on specific problems. In many cases, an extended family member, such as an ex-spouse, will be brought into therapy after family sessions are underway. In such cases, a different therapist may work with the extended family member to ease any discomfort he or she may feel about working directly with the family members or their therapist. Once this client is willing to work with the other family members, however, he or she is brought into the family therapy setting. With some families, conjoint marital therapy with a male and a female therapist may be used. In this type of therapy, the therapists can support and observe one another; they also serve as a model of "healthy" adult-adult interaction in families.

Staff Qualifications

Staff implementing the Remarried Family Counseling Model should have competencies in the following areas: family therapy, brief therapy methods, child development, and methods of individual therapy. The staff should also be thoroughly familiar with the structure and functioning of remarried families. In terms of personal characteristics, the staff should be emotionally mature, non-judgmental and have a high tolerance for the chaos and ambiguity often experienced by therapists working with remarried families. Although not required, it is often desirable for the therapists themselves to have experienced remarriage.

Appropriate Settings for Implementation

The Remarried Family Counseling Model can appropriately be implemented in community mental health centers, other mental health clinics and in private practice. In general, the implementation considerations discussed under the Family Counseling Model for Divorce also apply to the Family Counseling Model for Remarriage.

ADDITIONAL READING ON FAMILY THERAPY

Zuk, G., & Boszormenji-Nagy, I. (Eds.). Family therapy and disturbed families. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, 1967.

This volume brings together papers presented at a conference planned by the editors and entitled "Family Process and Psychopathology: Perspectives of the Social Scientist and Clinician." The focus of the interdisciplinary conference was on the nature of pathogenicity in social systems, particularly the family, and on the method of treatment known as family therapy. Section I of the volume introduces the reader to the field of family therapy, provides historical referents and contrasts, and suggests issues, areas, and special problems that need to be dealt with. Section II addresses more specifically the problem of describing pathogenicity in family systems. It attempts to define such concepts as change in individuals and families, and mental "health" and "illness" in close-relating persons, families, and other social systems. Section III examines the relationship among pathogenicity, sociocultural phenomena, and the family or marriage system. Section IV is concerned with clinical and treatment-related issues. It explores the theory and technique of family therapy and the therapy of married couples.

Ferber, A., Mendelsohn, M., & Napier, A. The book of family therapy. Science House, 1972.

This collection of essays by leading family therapists covers a wide variety of approaches and perspectives in the field. It is intended for individuals who are becoming family therapists, teachers of family therapy, experienced family therapists, and prospective patients in family therapy. As a state-of-the-art overview of family therapy, the book covers a wide range of topics, including the process of becoming a family therapist, the experience of being a patient in family therapy, techniques of family therapy, and the teaching of family therapy. Also included is an appendix listing films about family therapy.

Haley, J. Problem-solving therapy. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1976.

This book by one of the seminal thinkers in the field of family therapy is written for therapists who wish to develop specific techniques for resolving human problems and for teachers of therapy who wish to teach specific skills. The therapy approach presented focuses on solving a client's presenting problems within the framework of the family. The emphasis is on approaching each problem with special techniques that are appropriate for the specific situation. Particular attention is given to defining the presenting problem clearly and designing an intervention in the client's social situation to change that presenting problem. Although the book is problem-focused, the approach presented differs from other symptom-oriented therapies in that it emphasizes the social context of human problems.

Langsley, D., & Kaplan, D. The treatment of families in crisis. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1968.

This book describes methods of treating families in crisis. It reports on a project to determine whether family crisis therapy could provide an effective alternative to psychiatric hospitalization. Although the basic principles of family therapy are not new, this project was the first to test crisis treatment for whole families which include a person who would ordinarily be admitted to a mental hospital. The principles outlined here treating families at times of crisis are equally applicable to less serious crises among more healthy populations. This book should, therefore, be useful to professionals and others who are called on to help individuals and families in times of crisis.

Minuchin, S., Montalvo, B., Guerney, B., Rosman, B., & Shumer, F. Families of the slums. New York: Basic Books, 1967.

This book reports on a research project, conducted by a team of specialists in family therapy and in clinical psychology, to explore the dynamics of "disadvantaged" families that had produced more than one acting-out child (juvenile delinquent). An equally significant part of the research was to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of a specially deveIoPed technique of family treatment which employed a team of therapists working with the family members as a group and in various subgroups. An integral part of the investigation was a study of the performance of twelve delinquent-producing families and an equivalent control group of ten families using a specially developed pictorial projective technique.

Satir, V. Conjoint family therapy. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, 1967.

This is a useful and stimulating book written by one of the founders of the family therapy approach to treatment. The author presents a well-thought-out system of conjoint family therapy that has been developed over a number of years. The system presented here focuses on the relationship between the "identified patient" and his or her family. The guiding assumption is that an individual's behavior is a response to a complex set of regular and predictable "rules" governing his or her family group.

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THE EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Overview

The Educational Model is a short-term instructional approach to help parents, youth, and children of separation, divorce, and remarriage to understand their family situation and to develop skills to cope with family change.

The Educational Model focuses on general problems, involves a relatively pre-structured curriculum, limits extensive personal self-disclosure, limits the degree of intimacy of interaction between the participants and the leader, and generally occurs in a group setting where participants can directly share and compare their experiences with others in a similar life situation.

Separate educational interventions for divorced parents, children and youth of divorce, remarried parents and children and youth of remarriage, are described here in detail. A procedure generally applicable to all of these groups is also presented. In general, three types of educational formats can be used: (1) a single one-to-three hour seminar; (2) a one- to one-and-a-half day workshop; and (3) a series of eight-to-ten weekly sessions, each of which lasts approximately one to three hours. This last format (eight to ten weekly sessions) is described in the greatest detail in the following sections because it is the most frequently used approach.

As for the educational group sessions themselves, they involve three phases. The first phase, called problem identification, includes an introduction to the topic through lectures, related warm-up exercises, and stimulus materials. The second phase, called group discussion, involves a discussion of the topic with a particular focus on applying the material to one's personal life experiences. The final phase, called skill training, involves a major conceptualization and analysis of the problem during which time specific behavioral skills are identified, demonstrated, and practiced.

The following description of the Educational Model includes selection criteria for participants, discusses the initial interview with potential participants, and provides suggested topics for discussion. A discussion of considerations for working with parents, children/youth, entire families and parent-child units is presented. Staff qualifications and training are also discussed.

Finally, the Educational Model is considered a particularly useful intervention because it can work effectively in conjunction with a counseling or self-help approach, is relatively economical, and can be implemented in a variety of traditional as well as alternative service settings.

Why An Educational Approach?

During the past decade, increasing interest and attention have been given to the use of educational approaches for helping individuals and families experiencing predictable and unpredictable personal life crises. For example, educational programs are currently being offered to guide premarital preparation, family planning, marital communication, effective parenting, family financial management, family conflict and stress management, assertiveness training, and aging, death, and dying.

The Educational Model is instructive; its intent is to inform parents and children of the basic processes of family separation, divorce, and/or remarriage. It also teaches parents and children new skills that can be used to resolve current or future problems related to the family change. The format of the Educational Model is a group setting in which the members learn and practice new skills with others who share similar life experiences.

It is difficult to make a clear distinction between educational and counseling approaches because education may serve a therapeutic function and counseling is often educational. It is useful at the outset to identify the major differences between these two approaches:

- Educational programs focus on general problems and concerns that participants share whereas counseling focuses on individual, specific, and idiosyncratic problems and concerns. This does not suggest however that educational approaches do not deal with information that specifically relates to the personal experiences of the individuals involved.

- Educational programs generally rely upon a pre-structured curriculum whereas counseling is typically tailored to meet the needs of particular individuals or families.

- Educational programs avoid eliciting highly personal information even when the content relates to their personal lives whereas counseling actively seeks personal self-disclosure.

- Educational programs attempt to limit the extent of personal self-disclosure whereas counseling does not place such limits on self-disclosure.

- In educational programs, the degree of intimacy and personal contact between the leader and the participant is much less than the degree of intimacy and personal contact between the counselor and client.

- Educational programs involve an implicit contract between the leader and the participant which can be stated as the following: "I will make available information that you can use as you wish," whereas counseling involves an implicit contract between the counselor and the client which can be stated as the following: "I will help you with your problem."

- Educational programs are most appropriately and efficiently conducted in a group setting involving individuals with minimal history or tradition whereas counseling is typically conducted in individual, couple, or family sessions involving persons with an extended history or tradition.

- Educational programs provide an opportunity for participants to compare their current experience with others in a direct way whereas counseling does not provide this experience and, at best, similar experiences of others are relayed via the counselor in an indirect way.

Educational and counseling approaches, however, do overlap in several significant ways. Both approaches can and often do deal with personal, emotionally "charged" information. As a result, both the educator and the counselor must have skills necessary for handling the responses of the persons involved. In addition, a successful counselor or educator must establish an empathic and understanding relationship with the clients or students, for both education and counseling are enhanced by a supportive and nurturant relationship.

The rationale for using an educational approach to work with individuals and families at a time of significant personal life change (such as separation, divorce, and remarriage) is based on the following three assumptions:

(1) A single event can have great significance on a person's emotions, attitudes, behaviors, and personal adjustment.

(2) The emotions, attitudes, and behaviors associated with a particular event are subject to influence by education because these emotions, attitudes, and behaviors are under the conscious control of the individual.

(3) The incidence of emotional distress and the severity of disturbance associated with separation, divorce, and/or remarriage can be reduced by teaching coping skills and by providing information that allows the individual to predict and prevent severe problems from occurring.

Additional reasons for using an Educational Model are perhaps more pragmatic. First, the educational approach is a relatively low-cost endeavor compared with traditional therapeutic intervention. Para-professionals can be employed as educators or group discussion leaders thus freeing the professional to function in a supervisory or consultative role. The educational approach is also more cost effective for its group setting can serve a larger number of people in a relatively short period of time.

Secondly, participation in an educational program is not associated with the stigma of mental illness or pathology. Because the Educational Model essentially offers people "how-to" information and skills, it may seem less threatening to many adults and youth and consequently may be preferred by them. The Educational Model can also be conducted in a wide variety of settings. Schools, churches, neighborhood/community centers, hospitals, runaway youth shelters, and court services are all possible and appropriate settings for an educational program.

Finally, what makes the Educational Model so attractive is that it can complement and work well with other approaches such as counseling or self-help interventions.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goals of the Educational Model are to increase people's understanding of the process of separation, divorce and/or remarriage and to help them develop constructive skills for coping with significant family change. Specific goals for parents include increasing their knowledge of children's responses to divorce/remarriage and increasing effective parenting skills. Specific goals for children and youth include increasing their knowledge of parents' responses to divorce/remarriage, understanding their typical reactions to family change and improving their ability to communicate feelings and needs to parents.

To achieve these overall goals, several objectives are identified. The objectives for parents include the following:

- to increase knowledge of children's age-specific reactions to divorce or remarriage by introducing, discussing and interpreting relevant research, theoretical, and clinical works at a level understandable to the participants;

- to increase understanding of children's emotional, physical and intellectual needs during family crises and identify means of responding to these needs;

- to increase knowledge of effective child-rearing techniques by introducing and discussing various methods of effective parenting;

- to increase ability to establish and maintain stable post divorce routines and plans for their children;

- to increase ability to cooperate and communicate with ex-spouse about management and discipline of children;

- to increase feelings of adequacy in the post-divorce parental role by improving parenting skills;

- to increase ability to communicate with child and ex-spouse by introducing constructive communication and conflict resolution skills;

- to decrease involvement of children in parental conflict by improving communication and conflict resolution skills;

- to increase ability to cope with current and future problems by introducing various methods of problem-solving;

- to provide opportunities to practice new skills through discussion, role-play, feedback sessions and "homework" assignments;

- to increase support network by providing a group setting composed of members with shared experiences and feelings.

The objectives for youth include the following:

- to increase knowledge of family change by introducing, interpreting, and discussing relevant research, theoretical, and clinical works at a level understandable to the ages of the children involved; (Particular attention will be focused on changing family roles, responsibilities, and relationships.)

- to increase knowledge of parents' typical reactions to divorce/remarriage by introducing, interpreting, and discussing relevant research, theoretical and clinical works at a level understandable to the ages of the children involved;

- to increase capacity to cope with the realities of family change by identifying realistic explanations and expectations;
- to increase potential for maintaining a positive relationship with both parents by identifying ways that children can learn to avoid loyalty conflicts and stay out of the middle of parental disputes;
- to increase ability to express feelings toward parents by introducing constructive communication skills and identifying feelings associated with family change;
- to increase ability to help solve current and future family problems by introducing and discussing specific problem-solving skills;
- to provide opportunities for youth to practice new skills through discussions, role-plays, puppet shows and "homework" assignments;
- to increase support network and feelings of security by providing a group setting composed of members who share similar experiences and feelings.

Target Population

The Educational Model addresses the general issues and problems of parents and children experiencing separation, divorce, or remarriage. Although an educational program may be beneficial to those who are experiencing severe problems, these individuals might also be referred to a more intensive counseling program tailored to meet individualized pressing concerns and needs. However, persons with serious emotional or psychological problems need not be excluded from the educational program as long as they are not disruptive of the group process.

Because the Educational Model is preventive in nature, it attempts to reach the target family at an early point in the separation, divorce or remarriage process. Efforts should be made to recruit families who are just beginning the process of family change for it is believed that these individuals may be particularly receptive to listening, understanding, and applying the concepts, skills, and guidance offered to them. However, those who have been divorced or remarried for a long time may also benefit from the program and need not be excluded if space and resources permit.

Finally, the Educational Model is sufficiently general that it can be used with families from different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds.

Separated/Divorced Parents Program

Selection Criteria

Since the target population identified for the Educational Model is deliberately broad, the selection criteria are not very rigid. Although divorced or remarried parents with serious psychopathology may benefit from an educational program, the educational program should operate as a supporting, rather than primary, program. Although it is believed that preventive efforts are best directed to those in the early stages of divorce, it seems difficult to place a specific time-table to that process because chronological time lines are often incongruent with emotional time lines. Given the lack of rigid selection criteria, it may be advisable for the particular setting and staff to determine their own specific and unique set of selection criteria.

Initial Interview

An initial interview with prospective program participants is recommended. During this interview, one can obtain information useful for both program development and evaluation. During the initial interview, the staff person may want to explore applicants' interest in and expectations of the educational program to determine whether the clients' need can appropriately be met by the program. The staff person might also briefly describe the goals of the program and the related issues of group format, content, and confidentiality. Both the potential participant and the service provider could decide upon the appropriateness of the program for the individual and his/her family.

As will be further discussed in the evaluation section, it is suggested that pre-testing or pre-program assessment be conducted in order to obtain data for program evaluation. The staff may choose to administer pre-test instruments at the initial interview. In any event, it is suggested one get that a minimum of background information in order to have some basic information about the kind of persons served by the program. A sample General Background Information Form is provided in the Appendix. This form can be modified to suit specific program purposes.

Format

The general format of the Educational Model involves an instructional group setting. Instruction is both didactic and experiential so that the participants gain the opportunity to acquire as well as practice new skills. Four basic format issues are addressed: (1) group size; (2) group composition; (3) length of intervention; and (4) group structure. Although the composition of the group varies depending upon particular population served, the size of the group as well as its length and structure is basically the same for divorced and remarried groups of both parents and youth.

Group Size. The size of a group is important because it determines both the nature and quality of group interaction. Large groups are less likely to develop group cohesiveness because their size tends to inhibit intensive familiarity with other members and limits the extent to which members can be involved in verbal dialogues and exchanges. In contrast, smaller groups can facilitate group cohesiveness because they tend to promote more familiarity with other members and allow for increased involvement in group discussions. Because members in small groups can become better acquainted with one another, there are more opportunities for developing an atmosphere of open sharing and acceptance.

In a large group, the group leader assumes a more prominent role in conducting the sessions and is generally perceived by group members as being primarily responsible for the "success" of the program. As a result, participants are more likely to play a "passive" role in the learning process. In smaller groups, the participants are more likely to take an active role in shaping the program and to assume more responsibility for its success.

Although the Educational Model is not designed to be therapeutic in nature, the subject matter of divorce and remarriage is highly personal. If one decides to combine experiential learning techniques with the more traditional didactic approach, it is necessary to create a group atmosphere that is open, accepting, and non-threatening to the participants. In this group climate, personal experiences and feelings are more likely to be shared and the fear of embarrasment or failure minimized.

For these reasons, the use of small groups consisting of approximately 8-12 persons is recommended.

Group Composition. A group's composition is also an important determinant of the group process. While there are many possible types of persons that can comprise a group of divorced or separated parents, some "mixes" may be more conducive to learning than others. For example, it may be very useful for single parents to be in a group that consists of both custodial and non-custodial parents. The benefit of this grouping is the opportunity to gain additional perspective on the problems and concerns of both kinds of single-parent situations. In addition, since custodial parents tend to be female and non-custodial parents tend to be male, this provides the single parent with some of the views, emotions and experiences of the opposite sex parent. However, it is recommended to not include ex-spouses in the same group because the possible continued hostility between them may be both disruptive to the group and inhibit individual learning.

For prevention purposes the group should comprise persons in the early stages of divorce and/or separation. However, it could be very beneficial for the group members to be exposed to others at different stages of the divorce process. It is also suggested that the parents be either physically separated or have filed for a legal divorce. This would eliminate those persons who are, as yet, undecided about divorcing and who require marriage counseling or marriage and family life education.

Given the relatively short-term nature of the Educational Model, it is not recommended that divorced and remarried parents be combined in the same group. Their personal experiences may simply be too different to promote a common bond. Moreover, remarried parents are more likely to benefit from a group in which their current spouses are present.

Ideally then, the composition of the separated and divorced parents educational group would consist of both custodial and non-custodial parents who are unrelated by marriage and in the relatively early stages of the separation and divorce process. Not all existing programs combine custodial and non-custodial parents. For example, the Center for Children and Families in Crisis located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania have separate groups for custodial and non-custodial parents. (See Appendix 4 for a complete description of this program.) However, the demand for service may, in large part, dictate the group composition.

Length of Program. The Educational Model is a short-term approach. It aims to reach parents during the critical transition period when they are trying to accept and adjust to family change. Three different formats might be useful: (1) a single two to three hour seminar; (2) a one-and-a-half day intensive workshop; or (3) a series of eight to ten weekly sessions each lasting one to three hours. The intensive seminars or workshops might focus on a single issue (e.g., the emotional reactions of children to divorce or how to tell children about divorce) or they might involve several topics. In the two to three hour seminar, the format would basically involve a lecture whereas in the one and a half day workshop, there could be both lectures and skill-building or discussion groups. The advantage of the short-term workshop or seminar is that it demands less time and expense for the participant. This is particularly relevant for the single parent family that is typically beset with limited resources. The Families of Divorce Workshop in Topeka, Kansas uses a one-and-a-half-day workshop that involves large didactic groups as well as small discussion groups for children, adolescents, and parents. (Appendix 5 contains the curriculum/agenda for this workshop.) The Divorce and Marital Stress Clinic located in Arlington, Virginia operates a one-time, two- to three-hour educational seminar in the evenings for single parents. Although the seminar has a definite prearranged discussion topic, participants are encouraged to share personal experiences. This is made easier by limiting the number of participants to ten.

The eight to ten week format would be less intensive and probably cover a wider range of topics. An advantage to the eight to ten week format is that it gives the participant the opportunity to more slowly digest and integrate the course material. Programs that occur over a more extended time period can also use a number of different formats. In addition to meeting weekly, as proposed in this Model, groups may also meet every other week. This latter approach is used by the Center for Children in Family Crisis in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, because the staff believes that this schedule allows the participants additional time to integrate program material into their lives.

Group Structure. Several issues are addressed with regard to group structure. Consideration is given to both didactic and experiential learning techniques. These techniques are discussed in terms of the three main phases of the educational group meeting: (1) the problem identification phase; (2) the group discussion phase; and (3) the skill training phase. In brief, the problem identification phase involves the introduction to the topic. The group discussion phase explores ways in which the topic can be applied to one's personal life and the skill training phase involves an examination of skills appropriate to solving the identified problem.

The Problem Identification Phase

During this phase, the participants are introduced to the topic of discussion. This topic may be selected by the group leader and/or the participants. The introduction, however, should be conducted by the group leader as it should establish the objectives of the session, identify the major topic to be discussed, and describe the specific skills to be learned. Major terms and concepts should be defined so that the group members have a shared understanding of the language that will be used.

It may also be helpful to include a warm-up exercise or discussion at this point in order to involve the participants and generate interaction among group members. The warm-up exercise might be simple physical movement or could involve a discussion of current perceptions or feelings about the program. Participants could be encouraged to share personal anecdotes which illustrate how a concept or skill was implemented in their personal lives. Stimulus materials such as tapes, films, records, or readings might also be used to introduce the topic and identify relevant issues.

During this phase, it is important for the participant to understand the value and usefulness of the topic. For motivation to exist and consequent learning to result, it is necessary for the participant to believe that the information presented is important.

Group Discussion Phase

Discussion groups have been well received in the educational community for some time. They are particularly useful for integrating and applying course material. They also encourage members to respect and value both their own and others feelings and ideas.

Discussion groups are a natural follow-up to the problem identification phase for they provide members with the opportunity to comment upon the identified problem and to apply it to their own experience. It is recommended that the discussion group be semi-structured. The leader should focus the discussion on personal learning and the application of both the concepts and skills to one's personal life. Personal experiences that illustrate certain concepts and skills should be shared if possible. This early period of discussion promotes group cohesiveness and enables the participants to try out new skills that are introduced in the third phase.

The discussion could also focus on relating the material to additional topics and identifying the relationship of these concepts and skills to the general area of divorce and/or remarriage adjustment.

Although discussion groups are a commonly known and accepted procedure, they are not always productive or effective. Discussions can often become dominated by only a few members. The group can also lose focus and turn into a "social gathering." To avoid these problems, we have adapted some of Johnson and Johnson's* suggestions for a productive discussion group have been adapted as follows:

- Objectives are clarified and tailored to fit both individual and group goals.
- Communication is open and reciprocal during which the expression of personal ideas and feelings are emphasized.
- Participation and leadership are distributed among all group members.
- Personal ability and information determine relative influence and power in the group.
- Decision-making procedures are matched to the topic and situation.
- Controversy and conflict are viewed as positive indicators of participant involvement.
- Interpersonal group behavior is stressed; group cohesion is facilitated by high levels of inclusion, affection, acceptance, support and trust in order for participants to take risks and share personal information.
- The group should be enjoyable.

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*Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, F. P. Joining together: Group theory and group skills. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

Role of the Group Leader

Given the importance of a leader in promoting and maintaining an effective discussion group, it seems useful to identify the various roles and responsibilities of this position. Perhaps the most important responsibility of a group leader is to direct a group discussion without dominating it. The balance between direction and domination may vary depending upon the group's needs and composition. At the beginning of the program and of each particular discussion, the leader may need to play a more directive, active role. Once the group members become familiar with each other and with the format, the leader may not need to play as prominent a part. The foremost role of the leader is to promote a group climate of acceptance, trust, support, and warmth. To do so, constructive communication and empathy skills should be modeled to the group. Related to this role is the responsibility of the leader for establishing the ground rules of the group such as issues of confidentiality, support, confrontation, and cooperation.

Another role of the leader is the task-oriented timekeeper and manager. It is his or her responsibility to ensure that the discussion remains in focus and keeps moving. As a facilitator, the leader should be prepared to present questions or issues that will stimulate lively discussion and to be able to identify issues of concern to the participants.

As an educator, the leader should be able to restate and call attention to the main ideas of the discussion. Summarization and integration of the content materials is also a part of the educational role. As a resource expert, the leader should have relevant reading material available and also be informed of existing community services that would meet the needs of a divorced or remarried population.

Finally, as a process observer, the leader must possess a good working knowledge of group theory and observational skills. He or she should be able to redirect comments away from the leader when appropriate. In general, the leader is responsible for intervening in the group process in order to promote effective group functioning.

Skill-Training Phase

The skill training phase involves a detailed conceptualization and analysis of the topic of discussion. It also includes an exploration of alternative skills that can be used to approach the problems associated with the topic. The goal of this phase is to provide both a conceptual and behavioral understanding of the topic and related skills. It is also important for the leader to present appropriate theory and conceptual frameworks with a focus on relating the theory and research to personal life experiences.

Particular behavioral skills are identified and a conceptualization of how the skill is learned is presented. The leader might also identify what the participants can expect to occur as they begin to use the new skill. It would be particularly helpful at this point to have the skill demonstrated by the leader so the participants can observe the behavioral compenents.

For example, one topic that a divorced parents program might explore is how to tell the child about divorce arrangements regarding visitation and custody. Different syles of sending messages might be identified and demonstrated by the leader. A discussion of the consequences of different styles could also take place. Participants could practice sending clear and direct messages about divorce arrangements to one another in pairs or small groups. Another approach might involve the participants writing down these messages and allowing the group to read them aloud and react to them.

Since the skill-training phase involves the actual practice of new skills using experiential learning techniques, it seems useful to briefly address some of the concepts and techniques of experiential learning. Experiential learning emphasizes the direct personal experience of the content material. It is an active approach which stresses an intrinsic sense of success. Personal feelings are emphasized as critical sources of information in the learning process. In fact, feelings are used to help conceptualize the problem under consideration.

Experiential learning procedures are particularly useful in programs that emphasize skill-training as a method for understanding newly acquired knowledge. Although theory and research findings are important to help summarize and organize learning, it is also important to combine this conceptualization with direct personal experience. To create an experiential learning environment, it is necessary to provide structured experiences for the participants. In these structured experiences, the individual can experiment with new behaviors and hopefully begin to generalize these behaviors to life situations outside of the program environment.

There are several types of experiential techniques currently used. Role-playing is perhaps the best known technique. Role-playing typically involves an imaginary life situation in which participants (players) act and react according to specific instructions. The instructions generally include the assumptions governing the situations, the beliefs one should adopt and the kind of characters involved. Within the confines of the role play instructions, the players act as naturally as possible. Emotional involvement will generally increase if the role play is realistic and typical of the problems generally encountered by the participants. In addition to the learning one can gain from examining one's emotional response to a role-play situation, it also allows the player(s) to concretely experience the type of interaction associated with the problem. However, the simulation of the exercise allows one to try out new behaviors without suffering any serious or long-lasting consequences. After the role-play, it is important to gain the reactions and comments from both the players and the observers.

Other experiential techniques that can be used include communication games, assertiveness training, and structured problem-solving exercises. It should be noted that some individuals find role-playing and other experiential techniques too "gimmicky" or are inhibited with such nonverbal behavioral displays. The leader should be aware of these feelings and thereby assess the appropriateness of these techniques for any particular group.

Stimulus materials such as films and videotapes and books may serve as a catalyst for experiential learning as well. Regardless of the technique employed, it seems important to bear in mind that both the leader and the participants need to feel comfortable with the technique. These techniques seem to work best when the leader has had considerable experience using them. It is always important that the participants understand the purpose of the exercise and are given the opportunity to comment on its usefulness.

At the end of this phase, it is generally useful for members to provide one another with feedback on their skill performance. With this feedback, members can identify specific errors and problems in learning new skills.

Participants could also be asked to identify situations outside of the program to which the newly acquired concepts and skills could be applied. They are then encouraged to practice the skills and to eventually integrate them into their personal behavioral repertoire.

Group members might also be encouraged to evaluate the success of the session in meeting their personal goals. This will not only aid the group leader in planning future meetings but will also acquaint the participant with the process of observing and monitoring one's own personal needs.

It is the primary responsibility of the group leader to bring closure to the session. The leader might complete the session with an overview of the presented material and discussion of an agenda for the following week.

Recommended Format of the Educational Model for Separated/Divorced Adults

- 8-10 weekly sessions each lasting one hour
- 8-12 participants
- combination of custodial and non-custodial parents
- separate group for ex-spouses
- separate group for remarried parents
- concepts and terms geared to the participants' level
- personalized discussion groups
- use of experiential exercises

Content

The specific content or curriculum of the educational approach is deliberately presented in a suggestive rather than in a definitive form. Although it is believed that all programs for divorced parents should contain topics related to the ones suggested below, it is also believed that each specific program could be tailored to meet the needs and interests of the participants. As a starting point, the following list presents topics which seem to be particularly important for divorced parents.

DIVORCE SPECIFIC ADJUSTMENT

- Explaining separation and divorce to the child
- Custody and visitation arrangements
- Developing and maintaining cooperative co-parenting with the ex-spouse
- Understanding emotional and behavioral reactions to divorce for both adults and children
- Avoiding loyalty conflicts and placing children in the middle of parental conflict
- Importance for children to maintain a constructive relationship with both parents
- Understanding the legal implications of divorce
- Understanding the reconciliation fantasies of children
- Keeping children from becoming surrogate spouses
- Coping with new financial difficulties
- Communicating one's personal feelings about the divorce to the child
- Restructuring household responsibilities
- Changes in the parent-child relationship
- Maintaining a stable post-divorce family environment
- Dating and introducing new relationships to the children

IMPROVING PARENTING SKILLS

- Encouraging and responding to the child's feelings and needs
- Becoming a reflective listener
- Separating developmental issues from divorce-specific issues
- Styles of responding to children's feelings, needs, and demands
- Child management: setting limits and consequences
- Improving conflict resolution skills

- Developing assertiveness
- Learning problem-solving skills

Although this is a lengthy list of topics, it is not comprehensive. The leader and the participants might consider other topics more relevant than these.

Youth and Children of Divorce Program

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria for youth and children of separation or divorce are very similar to those for divorced parents. It is suggested that children with serious psychopathology need not be excluded from the educational program unless they are deemed disruptive to the group functioning. However, the leader may want to consider referring these youth to individual or family counseling. It is also suggested that the general guidelines with regard to length of divorce outlined for parents be considered. Once again, it is strongly recommended that the parents be either physically separated, filed for divorce, or consider divorce to be imminent.

Age is an important selection criterion when working with children and youth. Very young children (under age six) will require much shorter sessions and more play activity. Given the formulation of the current model, we do not recommend its use with children under age six. For children between ages six and ten, it is suggested that the model be somewhat modified to allow for more "fun" time and more physical activity. Of course, all content would need to be interpreted in a form understandable to children.

The Model seems best suited for children between the ages of ten and eighteen because it relies extensively on theory and concepts. However, it is believed that the program can be modified and adapted to suit children of various ages. As will be discussed in the format section of this intervention, children of different ages will be placed into separate groups.

Initial Interview

As with adults, the initial interview is used to obtain relevant information about the child and to provide information about the program to the child. The interviewer may want to ask the child about his or her present living situation and how he or she feels about the living arrangement. It might also be useful to describe the educational program to the child and to encourage him or her to ask questions about it. Expectations for the program, relative to both its content and format, might also be explored.

The initial interview is a critical part of the intervention. It sets the stage and creates the first impression for the child's perception of the program. Therefore, it is desirable for the interview to be conducted by a professional (preferably the group leader) in a sensitive but straightforward manner.

If an evaluation of the program's effectiveness is planned, pretesting assessment might also be conducted during the initial interview. In addition, background information on the child might be obtained. A Sample Background Information Form is provided in the Appendix. However, any particular program may choose to modify this form or to create one more suited to its own needs.

Format

Group Size. The implications of group size on group process are discussed in the preceding separated/divorced parent section. In general, the recommendations are essentially the same; i.e., it is suggested that the groups consist of approximately eight to 12 persons.

Group Composition. Several considerations are relevant for the composition of children and youth of divorce groups: age, gender, and siblings. With regard to age, it is suggested that youth be divided into separate groups according to age differences. One possible division might be the following: (1) age 6 to 9; (2) 10 to 13; (3) 14 to 16; and (4) 17 to 19. Of course, any group division will be based on the demand for service and the number of children/youth available to comprise groups.

With regard to gender, it is believed that it could be beneficial to combine males and females. However, if there is not a relative balance of males and females in the group, it would then be advisable to form separate boys and girls groups. There are also advantages to same-gender groups because the participants may feel less inhibited with regard to exploring certain topics.

Siblings and step-siblings could also benefit from being in the same group. However, some siblings may feel restricted by each others' presence. In general, age differences are considered more important than sibling relationships and siblings should probably not be in the same group unless they are similar ages and prefer to be in the same group. The Families and Divorce Workshop in Topeka, Kansas try to keep siblings in the same group if possible. They claim that this format allows siblings to develop a mutual support system that could be very useful during the divorce adjustment.

Length of Program. Like the program for separated/divorced parents, the Educational Model for children and youth of divorce is also short-term. It is suggested that one use a series of eight to ten weekly sessions. The actual session for younger children should probably be short in length (one-half to one hour), involve relatively structured activities, and include recreational/play time breaks.

Short-term intensive workshops (one day) could also be conducted for older children and youth. However, since the intensive seminars tend to last all day, we do not recommend them for children under age eight. The very short-term seminars (one to three hours) could appropriately be conducted with children of all ages.

Group Structure. Group structure consists of three phases: (1) the problem identification phase; (2) the group discussion phase; and (3) the skill training phase. These phases are described in detail in the preceding separated/divorced parents section. However, some unique features of applying this structure to children and youth are considered below.

In the problem identification phase, it is particularly important to introduce the topic in terms and language understandable to the ages of the children. For children, warm-up exercises and stimulus materials are especially useful because it actively involves them in the process and provides an interesting highlight to the topic.

The discussion groups for children may need slightly more structure than the discussion groups for parents. The leader should be prepared to introduce several questions that can be stimulating and challenging to the children or youth. As the children or youth group progresses however, the structure can probably become somewhat more relaxed because the participants may then be ready to introduce their own structure and topics of concern.

In the skill-training phase, the use of experiential techniques is also very useful with children and youth. In addition to role playing, children generally enjoy drawing pictures of their families and describing them. Puppet shows and the use of puppets in role-playing is also useful when working with children. In addition, children may work as a group on developing a large mural or collage which represents the various facets and feelings associated with divorce.

In both the skill-training phases for children, it is especially important for the leader to be very explicit about the ground rules. Children should be told that any destructive physical contact is disallowed. It is important that the physical facility be both comfortable and safe for children in order for them to be able to move about with ease.

Recommended Format of the Educational Model for Children and Youth of Separation/Divorce

- 8-10 weekly sessions each lasting one-half to one hour
- 8-12 participants
- homogeneous ages
- mixed gender groups, when possible
- include "play" breaks
- concepts and terms geared to the children's level
- structured discussion groups
- use of experiential exercises

Content

Although the content of any educational program should be altered to meet the needs and interests of the participants, the following list offers numerous topics which seem particularly relevant for youth and children of divorce.

- understanding family change;
- realistic understanding of the reasons and impact of divorce;
- alleviating self-blame and responsibility for the divorce;

- understanding and expressing the feelings of sadness, anger, guilt and rejection associated with divorce;
- dealing with loyalty conflicts;
- staying out of the middle of parental conflict;
- communicating one's feelings and needs to parents;
- maintaining a positive relationship with both parents;
- understanding parents' typical reactions to divorce;
- visitation days--scheduling, expectations, and leaving;
- dealing with the reactions of friends and relatives about the divorce of parents;
- money concerns;
- giving up hope that parents will reunite;
- learning assertiveness;
- learning how to deal with conflict;
- learning new ways to solve problems;
- coping with holidays;
- meeting Mom or Dad's new friends and relationships

Separated/Divorced Families: Program Considerations

It may be beneficial to have some group sessions that include both parents and children. This allows parents and children to interact together while under the supervision of an "expert" and among a group of supportive peers. It seems particularly important to include joint sessions for certain topics that specifically deal with parent-child interaction. For example, parent-child communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, and assertiveness skills might be practiced in a joint skill training phase. The Families of Divorce Workshop in Topeka, Kansas combined parents and children in a large group during the "problem identification" phase and then separated children, adolescents, and adults into smaller groups for the "discussion" and "skill-training" phases. A final feedback session was also conducted with both parents and children together.

Another approach is for the children to prepare a skit, mural, or drawings for the parents and then present this to them. This approach was found to be particularly useful for the Families of Divorce Workshop in Topeka, Kansas.

The advantage for the group leader in working with the natural, i.e., biological or adoptive, parent-child unit is the ability to directly intervene and coach the unit as they work together on learning new concepts and skills. However, the leader might need to monitor the progress of families in order to identify the need for possible referrals to individual or family counseling.

Another approach would involve using unrelated pairs of parents and children. This simulated parent-child structure may decrease inhibition and reduce tension while allowing parents and children to increase their understanding of each other.

Some topics that seem particularly adaptable to combined parent-child sessions include the following:

- understanding children's typical reactions to divorce, understanding parents' typical reactions to divorce;
- becoming a reflective listener;
- styles of responding;
- improving conflict resolution skills;
- developing assertiveness;
- learning problem solving skills;
- communicating feelings about the divorce;
- restructuring household responsibilities;
- visitation arrangements.

The group leader may find that additional topics are also suitable for combined parent-child sessions.

Remarried Parents Program

Selection Criteria

Remarried parents are those couples who are living together following a dissolution or death of either or both previous spouses. The couple may or may not have custody of the child(ren) from a previous marriage.

Remarried couples are generally reluctant to admit that they are having difficulties in their family, particularly if the previous marriage resulted in a significant loss of self-esteem and perceived personal failure. According to the Remarriage Consultation Service of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services in New York City, remarried couples generally wait until their problems reach crisis proportions before seeking assistance. When these couples do seek help, the stated problem is typically focused on a relatively severe child-related behavioral or emotional problem. Because the child's problems may be an indication of family difficulties, it is important not to prematurely exclude such cases from the Educational intervention without further exploring the duration and nature of the child-related problem. If the child-related problem seems to be of long duration and clearly represents severe child psychopathology, then the remarried couple might be additionally served by some counseling. Similar consideration should be given to the parents' psychological condition.

Ideally, the participants of an educational approach would be parents who are currently faced with problems related to the complexity of the step-family structure. However, persons with severe psychological problems can benefit from an educational approach and need not be excluded unless they are deemed to be disruptive to the group process.

The length of marriage of the step-couple is not a particularly important selection criterion. However, given the preventive nature of the Educational Model, it would be preferable to see remarried couples in the early phases of their relationship and possibly even before they decide to live together. Given the typically romantic and idealistic phase of courtship and early marriage, (which occurs even in second and third marriages), it seems unlikely that many couples will choose to enter into a program until specific problems surface which threaten their individual or family functioning.

Unlike the separated/divorced parents program, it is recommended that both partners of the new marriage participate in the educational program. This recommendation is based on research and clinical work which asserts that healthy family (and stepfamily) functioning is based on the achievement of strong couple bonding. It may, however, be necessary to offer separate women's and men's groups for those individuals whose current spouses are unwilling to participate in the same group or in the program.

Because of the often continued hostility between ex-spouses, we do not recommend that ex-spouses be involved in the same group. If ex-spouses are having a particularly difficult time arriving at or maintaining satisfactory and stable custody and visitation arrangements, they should be referred to family counseling.

Initial Interview

Like the separated/divorced program, an initial interview to assess eligibility, needs, expectations, and personal goals is recommended. The interview also offers the opportunity to provide the prospective clients with information about the program format, content, and issues of confidentiality. A sample intake form designed to obtain general information about the individual's personal and family background is provided in the Appendix.

Format

The format for the remarried parents program is essentially the same as that described for divorced parents. Differences and additional considerations are discussed below.

Group Size. The major difference between the group size for divorced and remarried parents is that the remarried group consists of couples and thus the number of unrelated persons is smaller. The total number of participants should be the same, i.e., 8 to 12 persons, but this will consist of 4 to 6 couples.

Group Composition. As stated above, the remarried group is comprised of couples. We recommend that both partners participate together because of the importance of developing a strong bond between the couple.

Because the content for divorced and remarried adults will differ, it is not recommended to combine separated/divorced and remarried persons in the same group. However, it does seem desirable to combine custodial and non-custodial stepparents in the same group. The mix of these two populations could increase understanding of the unique problems associated with each life situation.

When one spouse refuses to participate in the program or when one partner finds it extremely difficult to fully explore some of the issues of remarriage and stepparenting with the other partner present, it may be necessary to offer separate men's and women's groups. According to Sardinis-Zimmerman,* women in "stepmother" groups valued the opportunity to discuss their concerns without their husbands present and, in fact, rejected the idea of including their husbands in the group.

As with all the interventions discussed in the Educational Model, the actual composition will be determined by the demand for service. However, the ideal composition would include both non-custodial and custodial stepcouples who are in the early stages of their remarriage.

Length of Program. The length of the program is identical to that suggested for the separated/divorced parents program.

Group Structure. The structure of the educational group consists of three phases: (1) problem identification phase (2) group discussion phase; and (3) skill training phase. These phases are described in detail in the separated/divorced parents program and are identical to the group structure recommended for remarried parents.

Recommended Format of the Educational Model for Remarried Parents

- 8-10 weekly sessions each lasting one hour
- 4-6 couples .
- separate groups for ex-spouses
- combination of custodial and non-custodial couples
- concepts and terms geared to the participants' level
- personalized discussion groups
- use of experiential exercises

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*Sardinis-Zimmerman, I. The Stepmother: Mythology and Self-Perception. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1977.

103

Content

As indicated earlier, the content presented here consists of suggested topics. The group leader or the participants may find other topics equally or more suited to their current concerns. As a starting point, the following topics might be considered for remarried parent educational groups:

- complicated structure of step-families
- expectations of "instant love and adjustment"
- expectations of re-creating a nuclear family
- coping with the "wicked" stepparent myth
- handling rejection from step-children
- dealing with competition for love and affection
- dealing with ex-spouses and in-laws
- communicating feelings to children
- responding to children's feelings and needs
- the role of stepmother
- the role of stepfather
- visiting step-children
- establishing new family roles and boundaries
- establishing new family rules for behavior
- discipline problems
- financial concerns
- implications of relocation or change in living arrangements
- adoption and inheritance issues
- sexuality in the step-family
- developing step-couple unity
- the role of a stepparent with no children of his/her own
- understanding typical responses of children to remarriage

- understanding children's attempts to disrupt the marriage
- special concerns of adolescent step-children
- dealing with guilt feelings
- developing family cohesion and unity
- coping with differing needs and values--integrating two sets of family traditions.

Children and Youth of Remarriage Program

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria for youth and children of remarried parents are similar to those for remarried parents. Children and youth of remarriage are defined as any child who has a parent that has, as a result of marital dissolution or death, remarried. The child may or may not reside with the remarried parent.

Program staff may find that remarried families who come to the program frequently have children with behavioral or emotional problems. This problem may stem from family difficulties and may be a reflection of the problems associated with the complex structure of step-families. It would be important not to exclude children with such identified problems, as long as they are not seen as disruptive to the educational program.

As with remarried parents, it seems most useful to involve children at the earliest possible stage of parental remarriage. The preventive focus of the educational model seems best suited to early intervention and may have the greatest impact on children before deep resentments and problematic family patterns become solidified.

Initial Interview

Like the previously discussed programs, an initial interview with the child to assess expectations, needs, and goals is encouraged. It is also an appropriate time to discuss program format, content, and confidentiality issues. Evaluation pre-testing might also be conducted during the initial interview. A sample intake form to obtain general personal and family background of the youth is provided in the Appendix.

Format

Group Size. The size of the children and youth of remarriage group is identical to the other programs, i.e., approximately 8 to 12 persons. A discussion of group size is fully addressed in the separated/divorced parents intervention.

Group Composition. The issues of age, gender, and joint participation of siblings in youth groups were identified and discussed in the section on group composition in the children and youth of divorce intervention. The suggestions made regarding group composition remain identical for the children and youth of remarriage groups.

Unlike parents, it may be desirable to include divorced and remarried youth in the same group. Combining remarried and divorced youth has the advantage of reducing perceived or actual stigma attached to being in a group identified for only divorced children or step-children. The Family Change Project in Minneapolis, Minnesota (see Appendix 6) appeared to have considerable success in combining children undergoing various forms of family change such as separation, divorce, death, and remarriage. As with other groups, group composition may largely be determined by the demand for services and the resources available to meet the demand.

Length of Program. Like the other programs in the Educational Model, the length of this program is designed to be short-term and involves approximately eight to ten weekly sessions with each session lasting one-half to one hour. For younger children the sessions should be shorter, more structured, and include recreational/play activities. Intensive one to one and a half day workshops lasting approximately six hours a day could be conducted for older youth. Very short-term seminars (one to three hours) could be conducted for children and youth of all ages.

Group Structure. The structure of the Educational Model is described in detail in the separated/divorced parents intervention. The children and youth of divorce intervention discusses the modifications and adaptations of group structure for children and youth. The basic structure and modifications for youth apply to the children and youth of remarriage intervention. Therefore, the reader is referred to the sections on group structure in both the separated/divorced parent and children and youth of divorce interventions.

Content

Suggested topics for children and youth of remarriage groups are included in the following list. As with the other interventions, this list is not exhaustive and other topics might be equally or more relevant for a particular group.

- communicating one's feelings about the remarriage to parents
- sharing the parent with his or her new spouse
- handling rivalry and competition with other family members
- dealing with loyalty conflicts
- going back and forth between two households
- dealing with expectations of "instant love" between step-parents and step-children
- dispelling the "wicked stepparent" myth
- letting go of reconciliation fantasies
- understanding parents typical reactions to remarriage
- learning new family roles
- learning new family rules for behavior
- dealing with feelings of guilt, anger, rejection, and abandonment
- getting along with step-siblings
- dealing with the implications of relocation or a change in living arrangements
- understanding the role of a stepchild
- coping with holidays
- maintaining a positive relationship with both parents

Remarried Families: Program Considerations

Given the ultimate goal of improved parenting and step-family functioning, it seems very useful to include some sessions that involve both parents and children. The complexity of the step-family structure allows for many possible groupings of family members including "natural" parents, stepparents, "natural" children and step-children. The family sessions suggested here include the stepparent couple and their natural and/or stepchildren. Any or all children might be included regardless of whether they reside with the stepparent couple.

Like the separated/divorced family intervention, it seems particularly useful to practice communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving and assertiveness skills in a skill-training phase involving all family members. This allows the family members to directly use the newly acquired skills with each other while "supervision" is provided by the leader and a supportive peer group is available. Pairing unrelated parents and children can also be a useful approach. This simulated parent-child structure may decrease fear and reduce tension while allowing parents and children to increase their understanding of each other. It may also prepare individuals for later educational meetings or counseling sessions that involve their own family members.

Group discussion phase sessions might also be combined for certain topics and children could present to their parents drawings, skits, poems or stories they prepared which deal with some aspect of remarriage and step-families.

There are several topics which do, in fact, seem best suited for a total family group. With the presence of all family members, discussions can be direct, children can feel more in control of the family situation, and expectations can be more openly expressed. The following topics for step-families are suggested by Visher and Visher (1979) as important for step-family reorganization and appear appropriate for consideration in the educational approach:

- identifying the family member's needs;
- understanding the similarities and differences in how things are done among members of the merged families;
- defining new family roles;
- dealing with alliances and loyalties;
- dealing with step-family myths such as the "wicked stepparent";
- unrealistic expectations of "instant love";
- creating and negotiating new family rules;

- working out the logistics of family functioning (money matters, holidays, discipline, chores, etc.);
- expressing feelings to one another (e.g., anger, love, guilt, loss and mourning, fear);
- understanding the complexity of a step-family structure and how it differs from the nuclear family.

Staff Qualifications

Given the importance of the leader in an Educational Model, staff qualifications should be considered. It is recommended that the staff consist of a male and female team. This provides a role model for both males and females in the group. However, staff resources and demands may not always permit two persons to lead a program. It is also possible for the group leader to have a peer co-leader operating as an apprentice. The peer co-leader could be an interested person who has successfully completed the program at an earlier time. College or university graduate students would also be likely candidates for the position of co-leader.

It is recommended that the leader have an advanced degree in one of the counseling related areas of psychology, social work, family studies, child development, or marriage and family counseling. Regardless of the degree obtained, staff should also receive specialized training in the areas of divorce and remarriage. Direct experience with groups, particularly marriage or family groups, is also strongly recommended. The leader could train para-professionals or peer facilitators to actually conduct the group discussion sessions. This would then free the leader to operate in a supervisory or consultative capacity.

It might also be desirable for the leader or facilitator to have had some direct personal experience with either separation, divorce, or remarriage. According to Visher and Visher in their work with stepfamilies (1979), if the leader has not had direct personal experience, the group may spend time at the beginning evaluating the leader's understanding of the topic. They claim that if the leader has had this personal experience, group members tend to trust him or her more quickly. Nevertheless, the critical issue with regard to the leader is his or her ability to understand and emphathize with the feelings and experiences of the group members. This need not require direct personal experience with divorce or remarriage.

Appropriate Settings for Implementation

The Educational Model is particularly able to accommodate a variety of institutional and community settings.

Schools

Schools seem a logical setting for the Educational Model. However, the desirability of this setting extends beyond mere tradition. Because youth spend such a large portion of their day time in the schools, this setting provides a natural, familiar and convenient place for youth to meet. Moreover, because youth are already at the school, problems of transportation are reduced. In addition, many of the negative effects of divorce experienced by youth are school and peer related. Conducting an educational program in the school can not only sensitize school teachers and other personnel to the problems of children and youth whose parents are separated, divorced, or remarried but can also provide assistance to youth in the setting where many of the difficulties are manifested. Developing an educational program for youth within the school setting also offers youth the opportunity to develop new support systems and friendships that can be easily maintained by their shared school experiences.

There are, however, some limitations to a school-based program. Students who feel alienated from school may be reluctant to attend. Further, there may not be available personnel within the school system to conduct the program and there may be some negative community response to having such "personal" programs in the schools. In addition, schools are often not organized to handle problems of confidentiality which could be a concern of many students and parents.

School-based educational programs tend to be limited to a population of children. However, this need not be an inevitable aspect of school settings for similar programs for parents could be conducted or parents could join in on the youth programs at specified and appropriate meetings. Another concern regarding divorce/remarriage educational programs in the schools is the issue of potential stigma associated with participation in a group specifically designated for separated, divorced, or remarried children.

Some educationally oriented programs have been successfully implemented in both open-school and traditional school settings. These include the Family Change Project in Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Children of Divorce Project in South Orange, New Jersey; and the Divorced Kids Group in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Community-Based Youth and Family Programs - Runaway Youth Shelters

Community-based youth programs may be a desirable setting for educational programs because they typically provide a variety of social services to youth and their families. In addition, they do not have the stigma of traditional mental health centers. However, because these settings historically developed from youth service and youth advocacy services, some agencies may have difficulty involving parents in the program.

Community Mental Health Centers

The community mental health center may also be a good location for an educational program. It has the advantage of being able to offer additional clinical services, such as individual and family counseling, to participants. In addition, parents may be more attracted to a non-youth oriented facility. A possible limitation of this setting is the widely held belief that mental health centers are reserved for persons experiencing serious psychological trouble. This problem was tackled by the Center for Children and Families in Crisis in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by extensive public relations and promotional efforts. They developed a collaborative relationship with the legal community and served as consultants to hospitals, clergy, pediatricians, teachers, school counselors, lay groups, and other community mental health centers in an effort to develop a wide range of support for their preventive approach to divorce. The Families of Divorce Workshop in Topeka, Kansas and the Center for Children and Families in Crisis in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania are good examples of community mental health center programs.

Other Possible Locations

These include the following:

- court services

- community-sponsored (e.g., Children of Divorce Project, State College, Pennsylvania)
- hospitals
- churches
- youth centers
- private agencies (e.g., Divorce and Marital Stress Clinic, Arlington, Virginia)

Additional Readings for Educational Model

Dreikers, R. Children: The Challenge. Des Moines, Iowa: Meredith Press, 1964.

This is a widely read book useful to both professionals and lay persons. The approach presented, rooted in Adlerian theory, offers both conceptual and concrete ideas for parenting. Specific techniques for coping with problems between children and parents are recommended.

Dreikers, R. Family Council. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1974.

Based on Adlerian principles, Dreikers outlines a conceptual and operations strategy for family decision-making and problem-solving in this guidebook. The notion of a family council is rooted in the value of a democratic and cooperative family system. During the family council, which involves regularly scheduled meetings, family rules are negotiated and agreed upon by all family members. This book details both the techniques and procedures for conducting a family council and offers concrete guidelines for its continued functioning.

Fisher, B. When Your Relationship Ends. Boulder, Colorado: Family Relations Learning Center, 1978.

This manual, developed by the author for use in his educationally oriented seminars for divorced adults, is a useful book for both the professional and lay person. It clearly identifies and develops the emotional process of divorce and offers constructive approaches for divorce adjustment. The chapter devoted to children of divorce is particularly useful for parents. Each chapter identifies the important concepts embodied in that chapter and also provides homework assignments related to these concepts.

Gordon, T. Parent Effectiveness Training. New York: Peter H. Wyden, 1970.

This book is the text used in the well-established, educationally oriented Parent Effectiveness Training (PET). The book identifies and elaborates upon specific skills such as active listening, constructive responding, conflict management, authority and power, discipline and the "no lose" method of problem solving. Specific techniques for handling parent-child problems are presented throughout. In addition, very good exercises related to parenting skills are included in the appendix. These exercises could be very useful for an educationally based parenting program.

Guerney, L. F. Parenting: A Skills Training Manual. State College, PA: IDEALS Press, 1978.

This book is a guide for the educator or the parent to use with regard to basic parenting skills. The first section, called "What Parents Can Expect of Children," identifies typical developmental tasks and behaviors. The remaining sections focus on specific skills such as reflective listening, sending parent messages, structuring, reinforcement, and setting rules, limits and consequences. Each chapter offers concrete examples and special practice sections. It is a useful, easy-to-read, and well-articulated manual for both the professional and the lay person.

Miller, S., Nunnally, E. W., & Wackman, D. B. Alive and Aware. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Interpersonal Communication Programs, 1975.

This book provides extensive guidelines for effective communication skills. Although it is oriented to a wide audience, the principles and examples are often related to the family. Specific communication techniques are identified and discussed in detail. Each section of the book concludes with a summary of the key ideas and concepts. A workbook with experiential exercises useful for educational programs is also available. In addition, a classroom instructor manual which offers suggested activities related to the concepts and skills is available from the authors.

Satir, V. Peoplemaking. Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior Books, 1972.

This book identifies and describes basic processes of family functioning and communication. Patterns of communication, communication games, family rules and family systems are described in detail. A chapter is devoted to single-parent and "blended" (stepfamily) families. This chapter examines some of the unique challenges and difficulties of these variant family forms and identifies ways in which family members can adjust to the particular demands of this single-parent and blended family structure. Peoplemaking is written in a style easily understood by both professionals and lay persons and would provide excellent reading material for families in either counseling, educational, or self-help programs.

Visher, E.B., & Visher, J. S. Stepfamilies: A Guide to Working with Stepparents and Stepchildren. New York: Brunner/Maxel, 1980. 280 pp.

This book reviews current knowledge about stepfamilies and presents a guide to clinical intervention with stepparents and stepchildren facing problems in the stepfamily situation. The first three chapters of the book examine the cultural and structural characteristics of stepfamilies and the available research on remarriage. Chapters 4-7 describe the stepparent roles and some of the therapeutic techniques which can be used to help both the natural parents and the stepparents handle problems and emotional stress. Chapters 8 and 9 focus on the "recoupling" process and on helping the new couples cope with internal and external pressures. The role of the children in stepfamilies is discussed in Chapter 10, and techniques for working with stepchildren in various age groups are described in Chapter 11. The final chapters of the book describe the use of family therapy techniques with the stepfamily as a working unit. The appendices include suggested behavioral guidelines for stepfamilies and an annotated list of references that can be used as additional resources. (ERIC)

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SELF-HELP MODEL

Overview

The Self-Help Model is designed for youth and parents seeking the emotional support and practical assistance of peers in similar family situations. The model uses groups to assist participants in dealing with the immediate changes and effects associated with divorce and remarriage, as well as with issues related to single and stepparenting.

This model differs from the Family Counseling and Educational Models in that it recommends an ongoing program offering peer support in an informal, comfortable setting. Group discussions are the primary feature of the self-help groups, wherein members share feelings, experiences, and practical information related to relevant topics of mutual concern. Other possible activities are planned outside events and a resource and referral center to assist members in locating needed information and services.

The major goals of the Self-Help Model are to strengthen individual coping abilities and the social support networks of group members. The groups are viewed as tools that enable participants to adapt to life events and to take responsibility for initiating desired changes. This strengthening of the individual results from the support and validation provided by peers who share a similar family situation. Other goals include helping participants overcome feelings of stigmatization associated with their marital status and encouraging them to offer practical information and assistance both within and outside the group.

Although coordination of groups by one or two trained persons is required, each group is owned and controlled by its members, who make all decisions concerning content, organization, and direction. The group leader or facilitator can play a role in planning and implementing the group, making referrals as necessary, training other group facilitators, and providing consultation to ongoing groups. But it is essential that the facilitator continually be aware of a major tenet of self-help: all participants have equal potential and the "right" both to help and to be helped by one another. It is the facilitator's job to promote these interactions in a non-threatening, non-dominating way.

The Self-Help Model describes groups for single parents, youth in family transition, and remarried parents. Selection criteria, format, and content considerations are outlined for all three groups. Facilitator roles are discussed in detail, as are possible limitations and dangers of the self-help approach.

Why Self Help?

Today, professionals and institutions are responsible for many of the human services once performed by families, neighborhoods, communities, and churches. This transition to more professional and impersonal forms of care has occured simultaneously with the breakdown in family and community support systems. Many in need of care now find that current services are either inadequate or unavailable, particularly in terms of providing social support.

The self-help movement has emerged in an attempt to restore a social community to those in need. The self-help phenomenon is often described as being a grass roots movement, originated by and for the people. Although most self-help groups recognize the value of professional care and service, they are committed to fulfilling various functions that they believe are not adequately addressed by professional helpers or institutions. Some of these functions include peer support and group identification, assistance from others whose situations or problems are similar, and practical advice concerning issues of daily living.

Although the content of self-help groups may vary, all such groups involve peers who have come together to satisfy common needs overcome handicaps or stressfull life events or bring about social or personal change. Help is offered within self-help groups in an informal manner. Members are able to respond quickly to one another's needs since all use their own experiences as a basis for mutual and collective problem-solving.

Perhaps one of the most essential features of the self-help process is the gradual transition of its members from help-needers to help-givers. Once a member's own problems are solved to the extent that she or he is able to help others, then new benefits of self help are derived. These benefits include an increased sense of competence for the individual as she or he helps others, an increased sense of equality with and social approval from those that are helped. The adoption of the helper role by members testifies to the ability of the group to provide a psychologically "safe" environment and an atmosphere of openness and honesty in which each participant's input is respected. These factors create the climate for a commitment by members to give help to others once they themselves have received it. Perhaps the greatest benefit of self help is that it enables individuals to take control of their own lives and initiate desired changes.

With these benefits in mind, the Self-Help Model has been created specifically to offer peer support and practical information and assistance to youth and parents who have experienced divorce and remarriage. Unlike the family counseling and educational programs, the strategies proposed in this model offer the individual an opportunity to relate socially and informally with others who share a similar life situation.

As with the other two models, it is expected that individuals will enter the program with some degree of personal conflict or emotional pain. However, with the self-help approach resolution of these difficulties lies not so much in the advice-giving capacity of the facilitator as in the ability of all members to express their feelings concerning divorce and remarriage related issues, to share information, and to offer emotional and practical support to one another. This model differs further from the Family Counseling and Educational Models in that it offers a simulation of or proximity to the conditions of the outside world within the groups, as opposed to the institutional setting or client/practitioner and didactic relationships.

The self-help group offers the opportunity for members to express their feelings and to share practical knowledge and assistance. The components of a self-help group, all of which offer the opportunity for developing peer relationships and information exchange, can include weekly discussion groups, outside activities planned by the group, a resource center offering information and referral, and a "warm-line" providing one-to-one peer counseling. In recognition of the fact that youth and adults may not have the time to coordinate all of these activities and will likely need to be paid to do so, the resource center and telephone line should be considered as options only if sufficient resources are available.

There is a role for the professional in the self-help intervention. Although self-help groups are traditionally planned, implemented, and operated by non-professionals, it is not always realistic to expect a single or remarried parent or a youth in a transitional family setting to have the time, funds, or training necessary to launch such a program. Nor may the individual's resolution of conflict associated with the family change be adequate enough to qualify her or him for group facilitation Consequently, a trained facilitator, preferably one who has experienced and resolved the personal problems and pain associated with divorce or remarriage, is better equipped to serve in this capacity. Moreover, a facilitator who is knowledgeable about other social services can refer members to professional counseling or educational programs if this is deemed appropriate. Co-facilitation by a member of the target population is strongly recommended for reasons outlined in a subsequent section.

Goals and Objectives

Although specific goals may vary depending on the target population of a particular self-help group, the model includes several goals that are generally applicable:

- to strengthen the emotional and social support systems of individuals who have experienced separation, divorce, or remarriage;
- to provide individuals with information and guidance concerning both day-to-day and long-term problems associated with their marital status or family structure;
- to foster and encourage a sense of self-worth among participants;
- to alleviate the sense of personal and social stigma felt among participants.

Objectives for meeting these goals include the following:

- to provide a group in which members share common family transition experiences;
- to provide a forum for the expression of feelings associated with divorce and remarriage in which all members are emotionally safe;
- to foster the formation of peer relationships between group members by encouraging social activities outside the group;
- to encourage participants to take an active role in offering one another practical assistance (e.g. childcare, transportation) both within and outside the group;

- to provide a forum in which information about divorce or remarriage is mutually exchanged;
- to focus upon each member's responsibility and potential for change;
- to encourage members to take concrete actions toward making desired adjustments;
- to provide a sense of community to those who have undergone similar family changes;
- to develop concrete strategies for coping with perceived or actual stigma.

Target Population

The Self-Help Model is appropriate for those individuals who have experienced divorce or remarriage either recently or at any time in the past. Although it can be quite helpful to those in the midst of family change, the Family Counseling or Educational strategies may be equally, if not more, appropriate for this population. It is highly recommended that facilitators carefully screen participants in family crisis or monitor them closely in the group setting for possible referral to more appropriate services. The self-help group could serve as a very useful adjunct to either counseling or educational approaches.

The flexible nature of the Self-Help Model is such that it can accommodate either the divorced or the remarried. It is appropriate for all age levels with the exception of children under the age or 12. The developmental levels of younger children may inhibit the effectiveness of this strategy.

Since the problems and needs of divorced and remarried parents are fairly distinct, it is recommended that separate self-help groups be created for each. However, it is believed that self-help programs for youth may be most beneficial if they include adolescents experiencing various types of family change (i.e., separation, divorce, or remarriage). This type of "mixed" group may alleviate some concerns of stigmatization and may also demonstrate that feelings of loss, sadness, and anger occur as a result of a variety of family changes. In addition, a "mixed" group may help youth learn that certain coping strategies can often be employed in many different life circumstances.

Attempts should be made to reach those persons to whom traditional social services are not accessible or desirable. Too often programs for the divorced and remarried, whatever their foci and provisions, ultimately serve only a white middle class population. Whether this is due to limited outreach efforts or to a belief on the part of low-income individuals that the service is a luxury they cannot afford, exceptional attempts are generally not made to reach either indigent persons or minorities. Thus, it is highly recommended that an effort be made to draw these groups into this intervention. A self-help group is not costly to implement or maintain. Depending upon the financial resources of the organization sponsoring the group, members can participate without charge or for a very minimal fee.

There are certain disadvantages, however, to drawing persons of diverse ethnic backgrounds or economic circumstances into the same group. Those people who are ethnically different or have much lower incomes than the majority of participants may feel subtly oppressed by a group that does not address financial, ethnic, or racial problems related to divorce or remarriage. The sense of isolation may be enhanced by lack of identification with other group members. The facilitator will likely discover what kinds of population mixes work best. But she or he should consider it a responsibility to make sure that no individuals are excluded from self-help because of race, ethnicity, or financial status.

Role of the Facilitator

Three major responsibilities define the role of the facilitator or coordinator of the self-help group: planning (set up), implementation (start up), and facilitation (back up). There are many levels of responsibility that a facilitator can take in the planning, implementation, and ongoing activities of a self-help group. These range from providing minimal guidance or consultation to those interested in starting groups to total responsibility for all phases of group development. This Model suggests some facilitator involvement at all stages of group development. It also recommends the involvement of lay person(s) at each stage. There are several distinct advantages to involving paid or volunteer members of the target population throughout the process of group development. Since they are representative of the target population, they can:

- assist in outreach activities, utilizing their own peer networks and offering suggestions as to how other participants can best be reached;

- familiarize the facilitator with the specific issues and problems of concern to the target population;

- serve within the group as back up to the facilitator and as role models to the other group members; and

- initiate self-help groups in their own neighborhoods or communities with assistance from the facilitator once they have obtained adequate group development and facilitation skills.

For this last reason, it is especially recommended that low-income or minority persons be involved in assisting the facilitator. In this way, people will be reached who, for whatever reasons, may be otherwise reluctant to participate. One major advantage of involving lay persons in all phases of group development is that it lessens the danger that the facilitator may, consciously or not, dominate the group. Participants can identify more readily with the lay helpers than with a facilitator who has been professionally trained or who has not undergone the family change common to all group members. The lay helpers also serve as role models who have resolved the crises of family change to the extent that they are actively involved in other projects. In addition, the helpers can convince participants of their own capacities for leadership.

Helpers assist the facilitator with planning and implementing the group. Their role in group discussion is similar to that of the facilitator. The helpers promote the helper/helpee interactions of the participants but do not take an active role themselves in giving or requesting help. In the following discussion, to avoid confusion between those who assist the facilitators, and those participant helpers who naturally emerge in every group, the former will henceforth be referred to as "co-facilitators."

Guidelines are provided below that indicate roles for facilitators and co-facilitators in the planning and implementation and facilitation stages of group development.

Planning and Implementation

Following a needs assessment (discussed in Chaper III) to determine the need for a self-help group for the divorced and remarried in a particular community, the facilitator should contact one or more persons who may be interested in becoming paid or volunteer co-facilitators. The needs assessment process will ideally have identified a few people who would, in the facilitator's opinion, do well as co-facilitators. If at all possible, these persons should be offered pay for their work. Given the limited financial and time resources of many divorced and remarried persons, compensation for their efforts is highly desirable.

Before actual implementation begins, co-facilitators should be oriented and trained in the basics of group facilitation. It is important that the facilitator conduct this training in a rather informal and nonthreatening way. Since the training should result in the facilitator and co-facilitator's being mutually capable, the equality of the relationships should be emphasized from the start. The facilitator can draw on and learn from the co-facilitator's experience related to divorce or remarriage, while guiding the co-facilitator toward the task of helping others.

Orientation should also include information concerning available resources in the community for the target population, as well as advice on how to make referrals. If a resource center will be a component of the self-help group, the facilitator and co-facilitator can begin exploring resources in the community and collecting materials at this point. Resource centers are quite time-consuming and need continual updating. Such a project should be conducted only if there is sufficient evidence that adequate funds, staff and time will be available. It is in turn of great value to those in the target population, who are often in need of assistance from community social, legal, and welfare services, and may not know how to locate them.

Outreach and recruitment activities are also conducted at this time. One strategy that might be particularly useful consists of sponsoring a free lecture open to the public that addresses some aspect of divorce or remarriage. Those who attend can then have a chance to sign up for the self-help group. This event should be held in an accessible setting within the community at a time that is convenient for many in the target population. Other outreach and recruitment suggestions are outlined in a later chapter.

A facility needs to be chosen in which to conduct the self-help group. The facilitator and co-facilitator can decide together on an appropriate setting in which participants can feel relaxed and comfortable.

CHECKLIST FOR FACILITATORS: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

(1) Contact possible co-facilitators

(2) Train co-facilitators in:

- group facilitation
- referral procedures
- community resources information

(3) Identify and gather materials for the resource center

(4) Conduct outreach and recruitment activities

(5) Identify an appropriate setting for the group

Facilitation

The facilitator's and co-facilitator's role of creating a relaxed climate for group discussion and rapport is essential. They must be able to encourage discussion without dominating or controlling the group. In the initial meetings, they introduce the planned topic, promote a climate of warmth, acceptance, openness and support, and provide a sense of closure to the sessions. They can foster an atmosphere of psychological safety within the group by communicating support of and empathy with the group members. Although the facilitator and co-facilitator offer little in the way of advice and feedback, they provide a sense of validation to group participants by reacting to their comments and behavior in as noncritical and nonevaluative a way as possible.

In almost all self-help groups, the co-facilitators provide a role model for the other group members. By listening respectfully and non-judgmentally to what each person has to say, offering feedback only if it is requested, and assuring that each person has an equitable amount of time to state their needs, they offer examples of ways in which participants should respond to the communications of one another. However, the facilitator and co-facilitator offer little in the way of self-disclosure themselves. This is to foster a peer-centered group. One coordinator in a West Coast single parent self-help group described her facilitator role as ranging from "a fly on the wall" to "a referee." While the facilitator and co-facilitator appear to be more passive than the group participants, they monitor the group process throughout and intervene either when asked or if the communication of participants is not moving in a positive, productive direction.

The facilitator may want to present communication group rules at the first group meeting. These provide guidelines to participants concerning how they can best accommodate their own needs as well as othe[illegible] Following are some examples of ground rules used by the Single Pa[illegible] Resource Center in San Francisco.*

"1. STATE YOUR NEEDS. If you have a need, such as to have someone listen, to hear other people's experiences, to get advice, to learn about resources, or to hear that 'someone cares,' express the need to the group. Most of us need help in 'asking for help.' If you are feeling general neediness, the group may be able to help you define what it is you want.

2. MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE RESPONDING. Listen carefully and actively. You may want to repeat what the person has said so that she or he can correct you if you haven't understood.

3. IN RESPONDING TO SOMEONE SEEKING FEEDBACK, SHARE FROM YOUR OWN FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE. Try starting sentences with 'I' as an aid in remembering to do this.

4. LISTEN RESPECTFULLY TO OTHERS' POINTS OF VIEW AND TRY TO REFRAIN FROM JUDGING THEM. The phrases 'I think you...' and 'You should...' often lead to judgmental statements.

5. DON'T REPEAT WHAT IS SAID OUTSIDE THE GROUP. This is the rule of confidentiality designed to protect your privacy and aid in creating trust and intimacy within the group."

The facilitator may also want to state in the initial meeting that one other purpose of the group is to move beyond self-disclosure to positive change. It is the facilitator's and co-facilitator's role to assure that discussion groups do not degenerate into "gripe sessions." Members should be encouraged at the start to attempt to transcend their collective and individual grievances by working together to promote change and to seek help.

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*With thanks to Carol Jauch, Coordinator: Single Parent Resource Center, San Francisco, California.

The facilitator and co-facilitator also provide referrals to participants who are in need of counseling or educational services. This requires a familiarity with community social services: their content, foci, structure and fees. They additionally act as resource persons (particularly in lieu of a resource center) to those in need of other services concerning, for example, welfare, legal issues, day care, employment and health. It is expected too that members of the group will share information of this nature with one another.

The facilitator can initiate two other services for the target population: a telephone "warm-line" and one-to-one peer counseling. Given adequate training (and time), a co-facilitator can take major responsibility for both of these services. They can be open either to group members only or to the community. If the latter, they serve as an excellent way to recruit community members into the self-help group. However, both are quite time consuming (particularly if open to the public) and require special training in crisis counseling skills. Like the resource center, they should be seriously considered only if adequate funds are available.

A final role for both the facilitator and the co-facilitator is that of consultant to other self-help groups. Whether the self-help group is ongoing or time-limited, certain members may wish to start their own self-help group. Or the co-facilitator may want to devote time to organizing other groups. Both the facilitator and co-facilitator can provide technical assistance to those interested in starting their own groups. If the original group is time-limited, members may wish to continue meeting after the group has officially ended. The co-facilitator and facilitator can let members know that they are available for consultation should this be the case. The facilitator can also be available to a co-facilitator who wishes to form another group. Although less assistance will be required in this case, there may be times when the co-facilitator will want to seek advice from the facilitator.

The roles outlined above for the facilitator and co-facilitator should be considered as guidelines and possible options only. Most facilitators and coordinators have found that they go through several role combinations before they arrive at one in which they do not feel overburdened yet are sufficiently meeting the requirements of a self-help group. Depending on the time and resources available to the facilitator and the co-facilitator, a variation of the roles outlined above may be preferable. Gartner and Riessman (1977) outline eleven such variations and include in their brief descriptions names of well-known exemplary groups.

Divorced Parents Groups

Selection Criteria

The self-help group for single parents is appropriate for any parent who is recently divorced or has been so for some time. Although single parents with serious psychopathology may benefit from a self-help group, the group should operate as a supporting, rather than primary, intervention for these persons.

The goals of the self-help group should be clearly stated in all outreach and advertising activities. Individuals should be asked during intake what they hope to gain from participation in the group and what kinds of single parent-related problems they would like the group to deal with. Given their responses to these questions, the facilitator can determine how successfully self-help can accommodate each person. In addition, the responses provide information concerning the issues that the facilitator can expect to arise during group discussion.

Format

Size. It is important to have a group that is small enough to accommodate all members within the discussion setting. Individuals may feel restrained in a large group, inhibited about expressing feelings, and in general more reluctant to communicate. The facilitator and co-facilitator should aim toward creating a warm, relaxed and friendly environment. This may not be possible with a group size larger than ten. Moreover, a smaller group is far more manageable.

Group Composition. A self-help group for single parents can serve the following populations:

- single parent custodial mothers
- single parent custodial fathers

- custodial parents, male and female
- custodial and non-custodial parents

These four self-help group options can be combined or altered as needed or desired. Separate groups have been designated for mothers and fathers, and custodial and non-custodial parents in order to decrease verbal inhibitions and provide a foundation of commonality between participants. If the individual categories result in a limited group size, then it may be beneficial to combine a few of the categories. While combining males and females or custodial and non-custodial parents may to an extent constrain mutual identification within the group, the perspective of these different "types" of single parents can be broadened by inclusion in the same group. Further, "combination" groups avoid the development of "in-group" identity. However, the placement of spouses and ex-spouses in the same group is not recommended, since possible continued hostility between them may be disruptive to the group as well as to the ex-couple's potential to derive as much as possible from self help.

It is believed that combining newly divorced single parents and those who are "veteran" single parents is quite helpful. Individuals who have already experienced certain events and emotions associated with single parenting are in a better position to provide support and help to others. They adapt easily and naturally to the helper role and are at the same time being helped through positive reinforcement as a veteran of the single parent experience. They also provide role models and hope to those who are not quite sure what their new roles will be or who are perhaps reluctant to adopt them. In addition, by finding that others are undergoing experiences similar to what they themselves have been through, they may be able to obtain a more satisfactory perspective on their own initial experience as a single parent.

It may be most helpful to initially advertise a general self-help group and draw as many divorced single parents as possible, as well as individuals who are not yet divorced. Information should be elicited from each person concerning length of time since divorce (if it has taken place); age, sex, number and ages of children; interests; concerns about parenting; and what she or he would most like to obtain from the program. Groups can then be formed, matching participants in ways believed to be most appropriate. Since a central concern of participants will no doubt be parenting, it may be useful to form groups composed of members who have children of similar ages.

Although a group composed of individuals from different cultural and economic backgrounds is encouraged, it may be found in practice that problems arise. People will join the group for at least one of three reasons: the desire to socialize with peers whose situations are similar; the need to share feelings in an open, honest and supportive environment; and, the need to receive assistance in very practical and survival-oriented matters of daily living. Single parents who are very poor are likely to join the group as a means to fulfilling this last need. They will be interested in learning about such resources as welfare, childcare services, and health facilities accepting Medicaid. Although they will share many of the problems experienced by other single parents, their financial status may magnify their problems as single parents or, on the other hand, may make these problems seem quite small in the face of pressing financial concerns. The facilitator should be aware of the kinds of needs that financial problems create and encourage these to be addressed by the group as necessary.

Length of Group. The self-help group can be either ongoing or time-limited. A time-limited group must be more structured in order to accomplish as much as possible. It can accommodate new members less easily than an ongoing group can since the progress of the group is disrupted when new members must be assimilated. A time-limited group can continue under the direction of one of the participants or co-facilitator of the original group, although probably in a new setting. The facilitator can act as consultant to the group, and as it starts up on an ongoing basis new members can be brought in.

Structure. Group meetings should be scheduled by members for times that are convenient for all. Many single parent self-help groups meet regularly, once a week on a Saturday morning or weekday evening. Topics for these group meetings should be selected by group members before each meeting (preferably in an agenda format) and should reflect their interests and concerns. However, if an individual comes to the group meeting with a particularly pressing concern, this should be addressed initially. The group can then move on to the planned topic later in the evening or at another time. The facilitator and co-facilitator should decide upon length of meetings, structuring time in such a way that the atmosphere remains relaxed and unhurried. It may be helpful to plan breaks during the discussion to provide individuals with the chance to talk informally among one another and to build relationships. The break also gives the facilitator the opportunity to speak individually with members who may need referral.

Group discussion should remain as unstructured as possible. The facilitator may want to introduce the topic and provide a sense of closure to the evening; however, the group should be free to take the topic in whatever direction seems appropriate, provided it is productive. The facilitator may initially have to encourage members to direct conversation to one another and not to him or herself. During the discussion the facilitator and co-facilitator should be non-authoritative, intervening only if the discussion becomes blatantly non-productive or hostile, or if members need assistance with communication skills. They can also provide feedback and input when it is specifically requested by participants. Another role for the facilitator and co-facilitator is keeping track of the group as a whole and making certain that all members are expressing their needs and receiving feedback.

During the first session the facilitator may want to introduce a structured "icebreaker" exercise in order to acquaint members with one another and their present situations. This example is a description of an icebreaker used by the Families of Divorce Workshop in Topeka, Kansas:

> Each parent is asked to use an adjective describing him or herself that begins with the first letter of his or her name (e.g., anxious Annie). The next person in the circle is then asked to repeat the name and adjective of the preceding person(s) and make up an adjective to fit his or her own name. The process continues until all participants are introduced.

The exercise is helpful in introducing participants to one another and in promoting a friendly atmosphere. It also gives the facilitator and co-facilitator some idea of how participants view themselves.

It is recommended that the facilitator also have each member discuss what it is he or she hopes to derive from the group as well as what he or she has to give to the group. This establishes the willingness of participants to both help and be helped. Participants may also want to establish mutually agreed upon goals for the group. Also at this time, members should be encouraged to think of topics for later sessions. During later sessions, the facilitator and co-facilitator can encourage participants to plan outside activities, in part by letting them know what resources are available from the agency or organization (if any) sponsoring the group. The facilitator team needs to make only minimal input, if any, in planning the actual activities.

Content

During the first meeting, members can make a list of topics they wish to discuss in future group sessions. It is expected that discussion content will primarily address the single-parent experience. Discussion topics might include stages of divorce, forming new relationships, time management, relating to the ex-spouse, parent-child communication, setting limits for children, and parenting adolescents. The group may want to vary the agenda with unusual and more social activities such as an evening of yoga, ethnic dance, or exercise. Participants may have talents or hobbies they would like to share with the group. A group session could be set aside for this kind of activity.

It should be kept in mind that the purpose of the discussion groups is twofold: to meet the unique and immediate needs of single parent participants and to do so in an environment offering support, warmth, and friendship. Topics and activities within the group should be ones that accommodate both of these objectives.

The group may also want to plan outside activities such as potluck dinners, picnics, or holiday parties. These serve as an excellent way to "wean" participants away from the facilitator team, who need not take part in the planning or the activities themselves. This makes for a more peer-centered group and allows participants to test their relationships in different environments.

Besides group meetings and outside activities, the self-help group can include two other components that benefit single parents. One is a resource center and the other a childcare service that operates during group meetings. A resource center, previously described, is useful to parents who need access to community services of a financial, legal, counseling, housing, or childcare nature. It can also include a "warm-line" for over-the-phone assistance and peer counseling, as well as one-to-one peer counseling within the facility itself.

As participants become more involved with the group, certain members may be willing to devote time to this center, particularly if funds are available to pay them. It is also possible that if no resource center exists at the group's outset, participants may be interested in creating one themselves. The facilitator team can assist them in locating referral information and resource materials and can also train interested members in providing peer counseling to single parents who call in or visit the center.

As stated previously, the creation of such a center is demanding in terms of time and funds. It is included as an option to be considered only if adequate resources and paid or volunteer staff are available. It should be recognized that given the financial situations of most single parents, paid rather than volunteer work will in almost all cases be a necessity. The development of a resource and referral center also requires that the facilitator or co-facilitator have the time to provide training to single parents.

One service that the self-help group should make every effort to provide for single parents is childcare during group events. Parents should be able to bring their children to a separate room in the facility where the group meets or to a conveniently located spot. A "sitter" can be hired to care for the children while the group is together. Participants can pay a minimal fee (one dollar per person each week should suffice) for this service. One advantage to having a group that meets on Saturdays is that parents would not have to make evening baby-sitting arrangements, which are both time-consuming and costly. Other alternatives for childcare can be arranged by the group; however, this feature of the self-help group is an important one, since without a childcare service many single parents may feel they do not have the option to participate in the group.

A final consideration for the divorced parents self-help group in terms of content concerns the creation of relationships and friendships that extend beyond the group itself. During the initial group meetings, the facilitator should encourage participants to be available to one another outside of the group. It is hoped that the nature of relationships formed will result in members feeling uninhibited about calling one another for both emotional and practical (e.g., childcare or transportation) support. During group meetings the facilitator team should make a conscious, though discreet, effort to allow and encourage the formation of such relationships.*

Groups for Youth in Transitional Families

Selection Criteria

A self-help group for adolescents is appropriate for youth ages 12 to 18. As with the divorced single parents group, eligibility is extended to youth currently undergoing family change or those who have experienced divorce or remarriage within the family at any time in the past. Adolescents exhibiting serious psychopathology may be helped by the group, but would probably be better aided by individual therapy.

The issue of confidentiality is important for this population and should be stressed during intake. Youth should understand and agree to comply with the guideline that personal information shared within the group be held in confidence by all participants.

It is recommended that a brochure briefly describing the purpose, content, and goals of the program be distributed to all interested youth. If they decide to participate, it is recommended that they share this information with their parents (both custodial and non-custodial). If a permission slip is used, it should be written in a matter-of-fact, positive tone, so that parents will not find the program in any way threatening. If a parent objects to a child's participation, the professional may want to speak further with the parent if inclusion in the group is important to the youth.

As part of the intake procedure, information should be collected concerning age, grade, sex, marital status of parents, and sex of custodial parent. Information concerning topics of concern should be elicited from each person. Since this intake procedure represents the youth's first contact with the group, it is recommended that information be obtained in a tactful and sensitive manner, preferably by the individual who will be facilitating the group. This initial interview will serve as

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*An existing self-help group for single parents is described in detail in Appendix 9.

134

an introduction between the facilitator and potential participants. It will also give the facilitator an opportunity to describe the program in more detail, answer questions, and obtain an idea of the composition and needs of the group. Trained youth co-facilitators can also participate in this process.

Format

Size. Group size is an important consideration. Membership exceeding 12 adolescents may necessitate the structuring of communication in ways that inhibit the goals of self-help. In order to maintain an atmosphere in which youth can freely express feelings and concerns with one another, a group size of 8 to 12 members is recommended.

Group Composition. A group composed equally of males and females is encouraged. Although the presence of both sexes may initially inhibit group interaction, it is expected that ultimately the communication skills of both will be enriched, as will the understanding each sex has of the other. It is also expected that males and females will have the same concerns about parental divorce and remarriage and, to an extent, will be using similar coping skills. Ideally, the group should be composed of half males and half females. Over-representation of either sex is discouraged. It may work well to include siblings and stepsiblings within the same group: this is left to the judgment of the facilitator organizing and executing the self-help group. Groups composed of only females or only males can also be helpful.

It is most beneficial to group youths by age. It is recommended that groups be divided so that youth of similar ages (e.g., 12-15, 16-19) are together. The junior high/senior high school age levels accommodate this division well.

Length of Group. The group can meet on either an ongoing or time-limited basis. Youth should be assisted by the facilitator in continuing time-limited groups if they wish to do so. With a group that is ongoing from the start, there is the possibility that some youth may not want to participate over a long period of time. It is expected that a core group will be formed by several members. It is important that this group be readily open to new members coming in, as well as accepting of those who wish to leave the group if they find that it does not adequately meet their needs. Others may leave too once they feel their needs have been met within the group. The group focus should strive primarily toward meeting the immediate needs of youth rather than on fostering a condition of long-term commitment by members.

Many of the youth in the group may find that it provides them with a sense of affirmation and support that they may not be receiving at home. For this reason, the group may fulfill a number of important needs. If the group takes place within a school, the facilitator should be aware that the school year calendar does not accommodate these needs well. Students can make plans to meet elsewhere (for example, in one another's homes) during school vacations. An alumni group can be useful to those students who have graduated and feel a need for continuing support.

Structure. It is expected that structural input by a facilitator will be more extensive for an adolescent group than for an adult group. Monitoring of discussions and activities may be necessary throughout the existence of the group, and a large degree of facilitation will be required at the group's outset. This is due to the fact that the communication skills and organizational abilities of youth will not be as sophisticated as those of adults and that youth may feel a greater inhibition about sharing feelings with peers they do not know well. Particularly in a school setting, they may fear that whatever emotional content they do share may go outside the group and come back to them in an unpleasant, hurting way. It is therefore important that the facilitator stress the need for confidentiality within the group and pay particular attention to fostering a sense of psychological safety for members.

As with the divorced parents group, a weekly meeting of 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hours duration is suggested. The group should be encouraged as well to plan outside activities. As with all self-help groups, the facilitator should attempt to direct the group toward a self-initiating stance.

It is very important that group structure encourage the formation of friendships among participants. The "peer counseling" that takes place within this group is very informal and natural, and no training is necessary. But it is important that the facilitator allow group members to demonstrate their natural helping abilities without permitting individuals to dominate the group. If everyone in the group is made to feel that he or she has something valid to give to the members and has needs that can be met within the group, then a feeling of equality and identity between group members will develop. This equality creates the climate in which friendships can be formed between members both within and outside the group.

The facilitator should maintain a position of neutrality throughout all group discussions. If an adolescent is experiencing severe problems that manifest themselves during the group, the facilitator should speak to this person individually, not within the group. The role of the facilitator is to monitor communication, not direct it, and to intervene only if it is necessary to rechannel communication in a more positive way.

Content

The discussion group constitutes the primary feature of this intervention. The facilitator can obtain a list of topics of interest and concern to youth during the initial interview and the first group meeting. During the first meeting it would also be useful to discuss the confidentiality issue further and to establish goals for the group.

Possible topics that may be of interest and concern to youth include relating to the non-custodial parent or stepparent, coping with parental dating, visitation issues, legal aspects of divorce, dealing with questions and reactions of friends and relatives, and overcoming loyalty conflicts. Because the role of the group leader is not a didactic one, the members will not be working towards "answers" to these issues as much as towards sharing feelings and experiences about them. However, the facilitator as well as participants should provide practical information where possible. This might include information about community services and literature concerning divorce and remarriage that is written at a level appropriate for adolescents. It is hoped that the major benefits of the group will be the support and validation that are derived from the discovery that others share identical conflicts and emotional responses. However, if it is possible, it is useful to have speakers with some degree of expertise in divorce and remarriage issues occasionally attend the group.

A resource center may also be quite useful to this group. Literature is available that addresses relevant issues to youthful audiences. Depending upon spare time and commitment, participants or co-facilitators may be able to compile this information themselves with additional facilitator input as needed. It is recommended that the facility sponsoring the group have the funds available for Xeroxing and/or purchasing literature.

Appendix 8 includes a brief description of a self-help group for adolescents in transitional families.

Remarried Parents Groups

Selection Criteria

The purpose of this group is to provide remarried couples with an opportunity to meet others in similar situations and to provide group support in helping individuals and couples overcome the initial hurdles of remarriage and stepparenting. While it is expected that most couples who express interest in joining the group will be formally remarried, this intervention should be available to those couples who are living together following a divorce. The group is also appropriate for those who have remarried following the death of a spouse.

The group should be open to non-custodial parents, as it is envisioned that non-custodial (step)parents will have concerns that are similar to those whose (step)children live with them. In addition, both non-custodial and custodial couples may obtain an enriched perception of the roles of one another from mutual inclusion in the group.

Since many couples approach remarriage without realizing the potential problems in store for them as stepparents, this intervention should be particularly helpful to them. However, it is probable that very few persons will seek this sort of intervention before remarriage or living together takes place.

During intake, potential participants should be assessed for possible referral to individual/couples/family therapy or educational programs. The conflicts experienced by this population often relate either to the couple or to the children, and each certainly affects the other. Because people in this group often do not seek help until problems have reached crisis proportions, careful screening is all the more important. During the initial interview, parents should be asked about issues of greatest concern to them. In addition, information should be collected concerning how long the couple has been living together, number and ages of children from previous marriages, which parent is the stepparent (if not both), and information concerning custody and visitation. Couples should be asked if they are experiencing any severe problems with the children, and if so, what they are. If the facilitator or co-facilitator feels that these problems (whether related to a child, spouse, or ex-spouse) are common and predictable, then inclusion of the couple in the group is recommended.

As with the divorced parents group, it is strongly recommended that ex-spouses do not participate in the same group. Because the purpose of the group is to provide support to the couple as a unit, it is also recommended that only couples participate. However, it is certainly possible to create a separate self-help group of remarried persons for those individuals whose spouses do not wish to participate.

The purpose, structure, and goals of the group should be explained to those who indicate interest. It can be stressed at this time that the group does not offer therapy or education, but rather an opportunity for the remarried and those contemplating remarriage to socialize, share experiences and reactions, and exchange practical information with one another.

Format

Group Size. As with the divorced parents and youth groups, size is important. The number of couples in the group should not exceed six. It may be useful to divide the group in half should certain topics generate an unexpected degree of interest. It is suggested that groups sometimes be divided by couples, and at other times by segregating males and females. The latter offers the opportunity for same-sex peer support.

Composition. It is recommended that the group consist of remarried couples. However, a group composed solely of remarried male or females can also be useful. Members may even find it more constructive to discuss concerns without the presence of their spouses.

The group should be a mix of "early" remarrieds and those who have been stepparents for some time. It is expected that those members who have been remarried longer than others will be in a better position to help the others and that their own early remarriage experience will be validated by the current concerns of couples more recently remarried.

Length of Group. As with the single parent and youth groups, the group can be either time-limited or ongoing. In an ongoing group, it is possible that individuals may drop out of this group more frequently than in the other two groups, since these people already have the hopefully steady support of at least their spouse or partner. Many may join the group to create a social life consisting of similarly placed peers in order to overcome feelings of stigmatization. Once these needs have been met and friendships formed, the need for a defined group experience may no longer be necessary. If the facilitator finds that this is indeed the case, he or she may want to create groups that are time-limited from the start. However, it is possible that people may stay in an ongoing group over a longer period of time, gradually shifting the focus away from broad stepparenting issues to day-to-day problems and events.

Structure. During group discussions, the facilitator should maintain a position of neutrality, guiding communication only when necessary. However, in the initial meeting, the facilitator should urge both parties in the couple to communicate with the group and not allow one person to become the spokesperson for the couple itself.

Because of the unique issues of concern to stepparents, co-facilitation by a stepparent is essential. Because of the different issues that confront the natural and stepparent who comprise the remarried couple, and also male and female stepparents, it may be useful to have the group be co-facilitated by a remarried couple.

Content

Discussions constitute the primary activity of this group. It is expected that three content areas will generate a variety of topics: the experience of remarriage (which may include "leftover" divorce issues); the experience of stepparenting; and feelings of social stigmatization felt by remarried parents. Parents should generate an agenda of topics during the first or second sessions. An initial icebreaker activity is very useful for this group (see Single Parents' Group description). At a later point, the group may want to plan outside activities such as picnics and potluck dinners that may or may not include children. These activities can and should be planned without the assistance of the facilitator.

A resource center is not as essential for this group as for divorced parents and youth. The literature concerning remarriage and stepparenting is scarce and can be easily purchased for or by the group.

A brief description of a self-help group for stepparents is included in Appendix 7.

Staff Qualifications

There are no absolute qualifications required for an individual interested in creating self-help groups. However, it is highly recommended that such an individual have practical experience as well as theoretical background in group facilitation. Knowledge about the effects of divorce, remarriage, single and stepparenting is also recommended. Where possible, facilitation by an individual who has personally experienced (and resolved) the issues associated with divorce and/or remarriage is desirable. Finally, the individual should be familiar with the various social, legal, and welfare services in the community so that referrals can be made and relevant information shared with group participants.

Appropriate Settings for Implementation

Self-help groups have the advantage of being relatively inexpensive to implement in a variety of settings. Although self-help groups can be easily and conveniently implemented and administered by mental health personnel, it is strongly recommended that the intervention not take place in a mental health setting. One reason for this is that many in the target population may associate the group with therapy and as a result be reluctant to sign up. Secondly, self-help is traditionally not associated with either the theoretical or literal domain of a mental health professional. Therefore, if the facilitator is such a professional, it is highly important that the facilitator primarily present him or herself as a caring and knowledgeable individual, and not as a "therapist," "social worker," or "guidance counselor." An imbalance and hierarchical structure between participants and the facilitator is set up by offering the group within the professional's physical domain. It is far better to establish a neutral meeting ground in which facilitators and participants can establish a democratic and equitable relationship from the start. And although some affiliation with a professional institution or service will exist in most cases, this affiliation need not be stressed in a way that is intimidating or repellent to potential participants or counterproductive to the goals of self-help.

Many self-help groups are lodged in unaffiliated facilities that have been purchased or adapted specifically for the purpose of having the group. It is recognized that this can be very costly and is not recommended unless funds are readily available or if a particular service owns freestanding space that is not currently in use for therapy or educational purposes.

Appropriate settings for adult groups include community centers, churches, schools (for evening use), and private homes of participants. During the initial implementation phase, the facilitator and co-facilitator should explore space options, keeping in mind cost factors as well as the perceived benefits of each option to the group.

Schools are logical settings for youth self-help groups in that they are a convenient location for students. Also, recruitment activities can be easily conducted within the school. They are further strategically useful if the facilitator is somehow affiliated with a particular junior or senior school, preferably in a guidance capacity. Both transportation and scheduling problems are eliminated if the group meets during school hours at a time convenient to all. Since the social alienation that youth often feel because of divorce or remarriage within their families may express itself most acutely in the educational (or peer) setting, the school is an excellent place in which to address the problem. The existence of the group within this setting may also help to sensitize teachers, other school personnel, and students from intact families to the existence and experiences of this population. A school group also provides youth with the opportunity to develop new friendships with peers with similar family situations in an environment that is mutually convenient and familiar to both. Shared school experiences provide another point of identification between the members of this group.

Since some adolescents view the educational experience negatively, alternative settings for youth should be explored, including youth centers and youth shelters. Some youth may feel that their participation in such a program within the school setting would further alienate them from their peers in general. There may be other problems associated with implementing a school program such as negative responses from the community or school personnel who feel the subject is too personal for an educational setting, or from the parents of youth interested in the program. Also, schools traditionally are not set up to deal with confidential material. One other drawback is the school year calendar, which is disruptive to the regular provision of support that the self-help group is intended to provide. Finally, if the group is not held in the school, facilitators who are not school-affiliated have an opportunity to implement and conduct self-help groups for youth. As with self-help settings for parents, it is strongly recommended that as many options as possible be explored.

ADDITIONAL READING ON SELF HELP

Caplan, G., & Killilea, M. (Eds.). *Support systems and mutual help: Multidisciplinary explorations*. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1976.

This book presents an overview of the research done in the areas of support systems and mutual help. Much of the material is quite theoretical, and therefore not as useful for those initiating groups as other resources. The book is of greater value to people interested in the findings of current research in the areas of support systems and self-help. Of particular use is a chapter that presents a literature survey of current interpretations of the self-help movement. These interpretations are derived from a number of fields, including sociology, psychology, political science, and economics.

Collins, A. H., & Pancoast, D. L. *Natural helping networks: A strategy for prevention*. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers, 1976.

This book first defines and explores the concept of the natural helping network, in which small neighborhood groups provide many service needs in an informal, natural manner. The traditional relationship of social work to these networks is discussed, and from here the authors present a case for a new kind of collaborative alliance between social work and the natural helping network. The second part of the book presents guidelines for the social worker, such as techniques of consultation with neighborhood helping networks, building and maintaining relationships with these networks, and establishing a consultation service.

Curtis, N. (Ed.). *Self-help reporter*. Bimonthly newsletter of the National Self-Help Clearinghouse, New York, NY.

This informative newsletter is very useful for anyone involved in the practical or research-related aspects of the field of self-help. In each issue specific self-help groups (and their target populations) are described. General trips, definitions, and guidelines are also prsented for those in the process of initiating a group. A list of new materials in the field is presented each month. The Self-Help Reporter can be obtained free by writing to:

The National Self-Help Clearinghouse
Graduate School and University Center/CUNY
33 West 42nd Street, Room 1227
New York, NY 10036

Back issues can be purchased at $.50 per copy.

Gartner, A., & Riessman, F. Self-help in the human services. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

The self-help movement is traced in this book through the use of an historical perspective. Particular attention is paid to the departure of self-help from more traditional forms of social service, stressing the aprofessionalism and non-bureaucratic aspects. Many different groups are described, including those in mental health, health, education, and social work. The book presents a lucid picture of self-help, particularly in differentiating it from other forms of social service.

Lieberman, M. A., & Borman, L. D. (Issue Eds.). Self-help groups (special issue), Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 12(3), 1976.

The purpose of this special issue is to examine self-help groups from the perspective of the social sciences in order to discover what the two can offer one another. The articles are grouped into four major sections: theoretical models; findings from empirical studies; case studies; and commentaries about the self-help movement from a social policy perspective.

Social Policy. Self-help (special issue). Social Policy, 7(2), September/October, 1976.

This special issue addresses self-help in a more practical, less academic and theoretical manner than the journal previously referenced. Articles concerning how self-help works and the professional role are included. Other articles concern special kinds of groups (such as those for women, the disabled, and the mentally ill). Of special interest are two articles devoted to youth groups: one entitled "Youth Helping Youth," the other "Rap Room: Self-Help at School."

References

Gartner, A., & Riessman, F. Self-help in the human services. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION

Evaluation is a systematic data collection and analysis activity designed to aid program management, planning and improvement by providing information on the efforts, effectiveness and efficiency of a program. As such, evaluation as described here is not only a method of determining the value of a program but is also an ongoing activity that provides information concerning program progress. Consequently, each program should design an evaluation strategy at the earliest possible point in the program's history so that the evaluation can parallel the development of the program.

Evaluation is useful for a number of reasons. Perhaps most important is that it can directly aid in program decision-making. Although some evaluation results determine the continuance or discontinuance of a program, it is likely that less extreme decisions will be made on the basis of evaluation results. For example, evaluation results may identify certain program procedures, practices, strategies or techniques that are dysfunctional or inefficient. It may also identify the need for additional resources. Evaluation results may provide some evidence to support a particular conceptual model upon which program activities are based and can also identify additional program monitoring needs.

Evaluation addresses the increasing concern with program accountability. In fact, most publicly funded projects are required to conduct some form of evaluation. In effect, evaluation offers a means of discovering new information about program development and outcome that can assist and guide program management and staff while serving the accountability needs of the public and funding sources.

Evaluation research activity generally follows a series of steps. These steps will aid in both the planning and the implementation of the research. Although this is not a program planning model (for a discussion of program planning, see Chapter II), planning and evaluation often go hand in hand. In other words, a good evaluation system is a necessary component of a good management system, with evaluation concerns affecting each program planning decision, and evaluation data affecting each step of implementation.

These steps are logically ordered. Decisions made at one step generally affect decisions at later steps. Decisions at later steps relate directly to decisions made at earlier steps. The seven steps in the evaluation approach are as follows:

Step 1: Identification and Formulation of Evaluation Goals and Questions

Step 2: Establishing the Evaluation Research Design

Step 3: Identification of Needed Resources to Conduct the Evaluation

Step 4: The Development, Adaptation and Selection of Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Step 5: Data Collection and Management

Step 6: Organization, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Step 7: Documentation of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Each of these steps will now be described in a little more detail.

Step 1: Identification and Formulation of Evaluation Goals and Questions

The very first step in an evaluation is to decide what questions need to be answered in order to provide a realistic, reasonable, and relevant evaluation. The appropriateness of evaluation questions can be judged against the stated goals of the program.

Tripodi, Fellin, and Epstein* have developed the concept of differential evaluation which is an approach to program evaluation that identifies distinct stages of program development and suggests evaluation questions that directly relate to the unique objectives of each stage.

According to this approach, program development consists of three stages: initiation, contact, and implementation. During program initiation, ideas are translated into a plan of action and necessary resources are secured (e.g., funds, space, staff, supplies). Staff positions and functions are defined. A needs assessment is conducted at this time to determine who is most in need of the service. The target client population is defined and eligibility criteria are established.

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*Tripodi, T., Fellin, P., & Epstein, I. Social program evaluation. Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock, 1971.

Program contact involves the efforts that are necessary to reach this population, which include outreach and recruitment activities. During this stage program staff delineate and attempt to overcome the physical, social, or psychological obstacles to effective delivery of services (for example, how to reach minority or low income groups who may be hesitant to use the program's services). The staff also acquaint themselves with other community resources that may supplement or hinder their program activities. Contracts, collaborations, or referral networks are set up at this time where possible.

During the implementation stage, the program is primarily concerned with providing direct service towards the ultimate achievement of program goals. In terms of evaluation, staff are concerned with the extent to which major organizational goals are being met. At this point criteria for follow-up activities are specified.

Differential evaluation assumes that three kinds of evaluation questions should be addressed at each of the three stages of program development. The first type of evaluation questions relate to program effort. Program effort questions are concerned with yielding descriptive information concerning the type and quantity of program activities. The evaluation data yielded by effort questions may refer to staff time, activity, commitment, and allocation and use of material resources. Program effort can be documented at any developmental stage. Information concerning program effort indicates the extent to which staff are actively engaged in the program. However, this information does not address the success of staff activities, nor does it provide information concerning whether or not program objectives are being attained.

The second type of evaluation questions relate to program effectiveness. Questions concerning program effectiveness yield data concerning the extent to which the objectives of a particular stage are being achieved. Effectiveness is a measure of comprehensiveness as well as success. For the initiation and contact stages, it is generally a quantitative measure (e.g., "How many filled staff positions have resulted from recruitment efforts?"). For the implementation stage, it is more qualitative (e.g., "What is the relative effectiveness of the program compared with other programs that have similar objectives?").

The final type of evaluation questions relate to program efficiency. These questions seek information concerning the relationship between efforts and effectiveness. They yield data concerning expenditures in terms of manpower, time, money, and facilities. The data often help program directors and staff to determine whether or not the same program results can be achieved either by reducing the amount of program effort or by choosing other, less costly alternatives. This type of analysis is similar to cost-outcome studies which measure the resources consumed in the program and relate that level of effort to change (or lack of change) in outcomes.*

Sample questions below are guidelines. Some of these questions may not be relevant to all programs for the divorced and remarried. Also, staff will likely think of other questions that relate more explicitly to the unique objectives of their particular program.

Program Initiation

Effort

(1) Has it been necessary to recruit and hire staff (professional and/or clerical) for the program?

Amount of time required:
Activities involved in recruitment and hiring:

(2) What resources needed to be acquired for the program? (Consider space, materials, equipment)

Resources procured:
Amount of staff time required:

(3) Was there a need for permission or cooperation to be secured in order to begin formalizing the program?

Permission, cooperation obtained from:
Amount of time involved:

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*For a more complete discussion of cost-outcome and cost-effectiveness studies, see Chapter 8, "Cost-Outcome and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis," in Hagedorn, H. J., Beck, K. J., Neubert, S. F., & Werlin, S. H. A Working Manual of Simple Program Evaluation Techniques for Community Mental Health Centers. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976.

(4) Have data collection procedures been developed for record-keeping and evaluation purposes? (For example, intake forms, record and chart procedures, forms, management information systems)

Procedures developed:
Amount of time involved:

(5) What needs assessment activities have been conducted?

Survey of target population:
Review of existing, similar programs:
Review of the literature:
Interviews with key informants:
Community forum:
Time required for each activity:

(6) What efforts have been undertaken to locate the anticipated target population (divorced, remarried, youth, or adults)?

Amount of time required:

(7) Have policies and documents concerning confidentiality, parental permission to participate (if a youth program), and involvement of human subjects (if a research project) been developed?

Policies, documents developed:
Amount of time required:

Effectiveness

(1) Are there currently any staff vacancies?

Number:

How many of the filled vacancies are a result of recruitment efforts?

(2) What proof exists that the program meets a community need?

(3) Why has a particular intervention (counseling, education, self-help) been selected over others?

(4) How will potential participants be identified?

(5) What steps have been taken to assure the target population's willingness to participate in the program?

(6) Have specific program objectives been formulated?

(7) Have detailed plans in order to meet objectives been formulated?

(8) Have staff functions and responsibilities been clearly delineated?

Efficiency

(1) Were different staff recruitment strategies used? What are they?

What is the difference in cost between strategies?

(2) What are the relative costs of initiation of this program as compared with initiation costs (if available) of similar programs?

(3) To what extent do staff salaries match responsibilies? Are salaries similar to those earned by others performing similar jobs in the community?

(4) To what extent are staff efforts duplicated (either among or between individual staff members)? Could this result in confusion or ambiguity over staff roles?

(5) Are staff members all in agreement with program objectives? Have any objectives been formulated that compete or are at cross purposes with other objectives?

Program Contact

Effort

(1) How much time has been devoted to outreach and recruitment methods? How many people have been interviewed for program participation, and how much time did this take?

(2) If interested clients have been referred to other, more appropriate programs, how much time did this take?

Programs receiving referrals:

(3) What efforts have been devoted to maintaining records of program activities? What is the amount of time spent on this task?

(4) How much time has been devoted to making contacts that could increase awareness of the program in the professional community (including mutual referral efforts)?

Types of contacts:

(5) To what extent are alternative methods devised and implemented to reach the target population if original methods are not entirely successful?

Alternative methods utilized:

Effectiveness

(1) How many persons in the target population have contacted staff to request further information or to express interest in the program?

(2) How many referrals has the program received from professional sources?

(3) How do outreach and recruitment efforts compare with one another in terms of effectiveness?

(4) What happens to potential clients who are referred to more appropriate interventions? Do they follow through, and are their needs met by these other services?

(5) To what extent do those recruited into the program represent the target population? (Consider age, sex, length of time since family change, race and financial status.)

Efficiency

(1) How much staff time has been devoted to each of the program contact objectives?

(2) What are the relative costs of the various outreach and recruitment methods utilized?

(3) Have outreach and recruitment activities been conducted throughout the community? Have any special efforts been utilized to reach lower income or ethnic groups?

Program Implementation

Effort

(1) How much time does staff devote to meetings reviewing staff objectives and providing input about program progress?

(2) How much effort is devoted to goal respecification and the location of additional (or unanticipated) resources?

Revised goals (include rationales):
Additional resources (include rationales):

(3) Have follow-up activities been formulated and implemented?

Nature of follow-up activities:

(4) Has client satisfaction been measured?

How measured:

(5) Have opinions about the program from clients been solicited?

How:

(6) Has a method for measuring program effectiveness been devised?

Description of method:

Effectiveness

(1) What changes or results in those clients who have participated can be attributed to the program? (For example, changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors)

(2) Have there been any unanticipated effects or outcomes of the program? Are they positive or negative?

(3) How does the effectiveness of this program compare with that of similar programs?

(4) What proportion of the target population has participated in the program?

(5) Do staff and clients feel that the program is meeting vital needs? What needs does the program not address?

Efficiency

(1) What are the relative costs of differing techniques (if any) the program uses to achieve similar results?

(2) What are the relative costs of the program as compared with similar programs?

(3) Could the same program results be achieved with reduced levels of effort?

As stated earlier, evaluation questions should directly relate to the specified program goals. If one were using the differential evaluation approach, goals would address program effort (type and quantity of initiation, contact, or implementation activities), effectiveness (the intended outcomes of program efforts), and efficiency (the cost of achieving these efforts in terms of financial and manpower resources). Goals are the specific outcomes that the program can realistically expect to achieve. But obtaining and specifying clear goals can be a very difficult task. In any one program, there will undoubtedly be multiple goals with varying

152

degrees of importance. There may be short-term goals which are quite different from long-term goals. Some goals may be incompatible with each other such that achieving one may mean that another cannot be achieved. In many cases, program personnel do not agree on program goals or their relative importance.

Despite the difficulty in specifying goals, it is very important to do so. Goals provide a program with direction and help to make the program clearer to program staff and participants. Program goals also provide the standard of performance against which evaluation results can be measured.

In order for a program to use goal achievement as an indication of program "success," the goals must be measurable. Adequate indications of goal achievement must be identified. Step 4 provides a discussion of measurement instruments which should be useful in the effort to develop appropriate indicators. Examples of program goals and objectives can be found in Chapter VI for each of the models.

Step 2: Establishing the Evaluation Research Design

There are many different designs one can use in evaluation. In general, most people think of evaluation as a single study to determine the effectiveness of a program. However, evaluation research can be conducted at many and various points during the course of a program.

The kind of evaluation which occurs at the near end of a program to assess its impact on effectiveness is often referred to as outcome evaluation. It is also sometimes called summative evaluation, impact assessment, and intensive evaluation.

Outcome evaluation attempts to determine whether a program has achieved its stated goals and has had a measurable, demonstrable short or long-term impact. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs use control or comparison groups to estimate the extent to which program outcomes were caused by program activities.*

In a classical experimental design, a representative sample from the target is selected. Part of the sample is randomly assigned to an experimental group which receives a program (e,g., counseling or educational) while the remaining sample is assigned to a control group (one that does not receive a program). The two groups are measured before and after the program and compared on the outcome variables. Any difference perceived in the two groups after the program, or in the experimental group before and then after the program, can theoretically be attributed to the effects of the program.

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*An excellent source on experimental and quasi-experimental design is Campbell, D. T., and Stanley, J. C. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963.

For example, a program that offers parenting seminars for divorced adults may want to determine the effects of their program. One hundred people are on a waiting list for the next seminar, yet seminar size must be limited to fifteen participants. Thirty people on the waiting list are matched on a number of variables (e.g., age of children, sex, education, length of time since divorce), and all are initially given a parenting knowledge test. Fifteen are selected to participate in the program, while the remaining fifteen are told to continue waiting. After the experimental group has completed the program, the two groups are given the same test. Differences in the scores of the two groups, and of the scores between the experimental group's first and second tests, are attributed to the program.

Considering the limited resources of most programs, this type of elaborate research design is often not possible. In addition, it is generally considered unethnical to deny a person some form of treatment when it is needed. Other kinds of designs (that are not so "classical" nor so "pure" from a research perspective) can be implemented.

A Case Study design can be used in programs for the divorced and/or remarried. This design involves simply assessing the treatment group at the end of the program. Because no "pre-program" data are collected, there is no assurance that the observed effects after the program are attributable to the program. Conceivably, some data may already exist that could be used to infer the state of affairs before the activity--for example, court records identifying the number of times a family came to court regarding a divorce/remarriage matter.

Another research design, called a One Group Pre-Post Design, involves the use of a single group measured both before and after the program. This design is better than the Case Study approach because it has data collected before the program which can be compared to data collected after the program. However, one must be careful in attributing the changes to the program, because the design does not have a comparison or control group which did not receive the program. Consequently, the design cannot account for extraneous events that might have an impact similar to the program, such as change due to the passage of time or change due to the effects of pretesting.

A Static Group Comparison is another research design that can be used when pure experimental designs cannot feasibly be implemented. In this approach two groups are assessed: one group which receives the program and another group which does not. Both groups are assessed only at one point in time: after the treatment group has completed the program. Because the groups are not randomly selected, it is not possible to determine whether they are equivalent and therefore any differences between the two groups at program termination could be attributed to initial differences between the groups.

No matter what type of research design is selected, follow-up information should always be gathered on a representative sample of those persons receiving the program to determine whether observed changes persist.

The other major type of evaluation is referred to as process evaluation. It is also sometimes called formative evaluation, interim evaluation, and performance monitoring, Process evaluation attempts to identify and describe the program's day-to-day activities and inputs. It focuses on the actual processes of a program during the course of its operation. Stringent experimental design is not necessary as there is no need to manipulate, control, or eliminate situational variables. This type of evaluation documents changes in program activities and patterns of program development. Because process evaluation is particularly concerned with project activities, it is important to plan for and implement this type of evaluation early in the program's history. Once the process evaluation is underway, it can provide program management with an ongoing description and analysis of project inputs and activities which can be used to continually modify the program and thus improve its functioning. Process evaluation is especially important because it provides information regarding why and how a program is or is not found to be effective. Finally, process evaluation enables programs to more fully account for program activities and thus renders the program potentially replicable.

A special form of process evaluation involves program monitoring. This has also been called Management Information Systems. Monitoring is generally a procedure by which basic program and client information is regularly and systematically collected during the life of the program.

Because program and client information is collected on a longitudinal basis, monitoring techniques allow one to examine program variations. Although any information collected by this approach should be identified by the users of the information as relevant to their needs and useful to their program, there is generally three kinds of information collected as part of program monitoring: (1) client information; (2) staff activities, and (3) progrsm cost information.

Client information generally involves demographic data such as age, gender, occupation, income, race and residence. For a program oriented to divorce and/or remarriage, one might also consider collecting data related to marital status, family constellation, current living situation, custody and/or visitation arrangements, length of time since divorce or remarriage, current concenrs regarding divorce/remarriage adjustment, referral source and previous counseling or therapy experience. Much of this information need only be collected at one point in time because it will not alter with time (e.g., gender, race). However, other information may be important to collect at various points during the program from initial contact through a follow-up session.

The aggregate data obtained from these records can provide the program with information about the kinds of persons referred and recruited to the program, the kinds of persons who remain in the program, and changes in demographic status during the course of the program. It can also help the program identify whether it is serving those persons most in need of the program as identified by the needs assessment.

Staff activity data describes the use of time by program staff in relation to their activities. It is also frequently referred to as time and motion studies. One can examine the number of hours devoted to direct service, the number of hours devoted to indirect service and the number of clients/participants assigned to each staff person. Staff activity can be monitored through the use of monthly or weekly reports. The data obtained from these reports can provide the program with information about the time spent on various program activities, unanticipated uses of staff time, the extent of staff efficiency in fulfilling program demands and the extent to which staff activity is spent in the service of meeting program goals and objectives.

Program cost information generally involves an examinstion of direct service costs, indirect service costs, cash flows, funding sources, rate-setting, billing procedures and budget information. This information allows the program management to better allocate and utilize resources. It is often an essential component of program accountability.

The three areas of information (client, staff activity and cost) described here certainly do not constitute an exhaustive list of information one could obtain. Monitoring techniques, like all of evaluation, should be tailored to meet the unique needs of each specific program. This will ensure that the information will be used and hopefully aid in the improvement of program effort, efficiency and effectiveness.

Step 3: Identification of Needed Resources to Conduct the Evaluation

Once the evaluation design has been established, it will be necessary to make certain that the general evaluation plan matches the available resources. In justifying the resources to be used, it is helpful to distinguish between those needed to develop the evaluation program and those needed to implement it. In effect, the key to a realistic evaluation is to be able to offset the cost of the evaluation against the gains in program improvement or efficiency.

Resources generally include human effort, technology, materials and finances. In some cases, an employee of the program or sponsoring agency may have the knowledge, experience, time and interest needed to perform some of the evaluation tasks. If such persons do not exist, outside experts or consultants will need to be identified. (A more detailed discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using insiders and outsiders to conduct evaluations is presented later in this chapter.)

Technological resources include equipment and services such as computers and computer processing. Material resources include supplies. Financial resources include the money needed to support the evaluation staff and their technological and material needs. Secretarial, mail and telephone costs should also be included in an inventory of resources.

Step 4: Develop/Adapt/Select Appropriate Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

In the development, adaptation and selection of instruments, it is important to keep in mind the questions identified at Step 1 that need to answered. Every instrument used to collect data should provide the information needed to answer those questions in the simplest, fastest, and least expensive way without compromising the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the obtained information.

There are basically four classes of data collection techniques: global, focal, obtrusive, and nonobtrusive measures. Global measures are useful for assessing general traits or states that occur across a range of situations. Examples of global measures include questions about overall happiness, satisfaction, comfort, adjustment, and general personality characteristics. Focal measures deal with specific behaviors targeted by the program. Examples of focal behavior include school behavior, relations with peers, and home behaviors such as cooperativeness and neatness.

Obtrusive measures such as tests, questionnaires and interviews demand that the respondent reflect upon his/her experience. In doing so, the actual process of completing a questionnaire or participating in an interview influences subsequent behaviors, feelings, or attitudes.

Nonobtrusive measures do not disturb the activity, feeling or attitude being assessed. Some of these techniques are also useful because they can be convenient and economical. Examples of nonobtrusive measures are physical evidence, records, and nonobtrusive observations. For a divorce program, one could use such nonobtrusive measures as the examination of court or school records or the observation of families as they interact in a natural setting.

As an indication of the many types of measurement techniques available, the following list is presented:

- interviews
- questionnaires
- observation
- ratings
- institutional records

- government statistics
- tests of informAtion, knowledge, skills
- projective tests
- projective tests
- situational tests presenting the client(s) with a simulated life situation
- psychometric tests of attitudes, values, personality
- clinical exams
- physical evidence
- documents (e.g. minutes of staff/board meetings; newspaper/ media accounts)

These different techniques vary with regard to how much effort is required to develop, collect, and analyze the information obtained from them. Of course, a particular agency should consider its resources (cost, personnel, time) when choosing a particular method. A measurement consultant would be particularly useful during the stage when a program is planning and designing its measurement techniques.*

If a program decides to use some form of interview, questionnaire or rating scale, it is most likely that questions and items specific to the program will need to be developed. For example, if a program includes a film on divorce, a questionnaire might include questions about the utility, helpfulness and interest of the film. While the scope of this manual does not permit an extensive discussion of questionnaire/interview design and development, a few pertinent issues should be addressed.

First, one must decide upon the type of questions to be asked. Open-ended questions are easy to compose but difficult to score and analyze. However, open-ended questions are generally very useful for exploratory purposes. Forced-choice responses may seem initially difficult to write but, in the long run, are easier to score and interpret.

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*Kerlinger, F. N. Foundations of Behavioral Research, Second Edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1973), is an excellent sourcebook that describes the advantages and disadvantages of various measurement techniques.

It is also important to consider whether one will conduct the interview or administer the questionnaire in person, by mail or by telephone.* Mail and telephone methods can be less costly but may not yield a satisfactory response rate. Many programs conduct the evaluation interview or administer the evaluation questionnaire during the initial intake interview and at the closing session. Another consideration involves the choice of who to interview. In many cases, it would be useful to interview all persons who have received the service or program. This might include both parents and children.

However, some programs, particularly those that follow the Self-Help and Educational Models, serve only one or some family members. In this situation, program management and staff and the evaluator will need to decide whether they wish to obtain information from those family members who did not receive any direct service but who may have experienced indirect impact of the program. In general, it seems most useful to have as many different sources of information as possible given the resources set aside for the evaluation effort. This allows the evaluator to compare responses of different family members which, if consistent, can strengthen the results. If the responses of different family members are not consistent, this provides important information about the differential impact of the program. It is, of course, important that any questions directed to children be appropriate for their level of cognitive understanding. Reading levels of questionnaires should always be suitable for the age group of those completing it.

In addition to program recipients and related family members, another source of information is the service provider. This can be the counselor, therapist, educator, group facilitator or any other person who has provided the services to the family member(s). The service provider offers a unique perspective with regard to program outcome and is an important source of information with regard to program processes.

There are two special types of evaluation research measurement techniques that will now be described. These two techniques, client satisfaction questionnaires and goal attainment scaling, can be particularly useful for obtaining information on program effort and effectiveness from the client's point of view.

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*Dr. Robert Weiss, Director of Seminars for the Separated, has found telephone interviewing to be very useful during the course of a program as an informal method of process evaluation.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaires

The use of client satisfaction questionnaires seems to be increasing as service providers become more aware of the need to respond to the interests and concerns of the consumer of their services. In addition, client's self-assessment is often a central focus of family interventions and is thus an important consideration in evaluation as well.

A client satisfaction questionnaire can solicit information about both the actual program and the impact of the program on one's personal and family life. For example, the client satisfaction questionnaire could elicit information about speakers, films, and exercises used in the Educational Model; degree of support experienced and personal assistance received from others could be assessed in the Self-Help Model; and extent of improvement in parent-child relationships and satisfaction with the therapy approach could be assessed in the Family Counseling Model.

Client satisfaction questionnaires can be used for both process and outcome evaluation at all stages of program development. More generally, one can obtain information on the client's overall satisfaction with the treatment received, the accessibility of the program, the friendliness and courtesy of program staff, the efficiency and organization of the service, the physical characteristics and physical comfort of the setting, and the financial accessibility of the service. In a very structured program, one can obtain specific information on each session with regard to its interest, value, helpfulness, clarity and applicability. In addition, the client satisfaction questionnaire can be used to obtain information on the client's own assessment of the outcome of the program. A sample client satisfaction questionnaire is found in Appendix 10.

If the questionnaire is designed to be short and relatively easy to administer, it could be used routinely with all program participants. If it is a more lengthy and complicated instrument, one would want to administer the instrument to a smaller, but representative, group of program participants.

It is extremely important that the clients be well aware of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. This is particularly important for reducing positive biases or what has been called the "halo effect." With a "halo effect," clients are reluctant to criticize a program they are currently involved in, have recently completed, and from whom future services might he sought. In addition, there is a tendency for dissatisfied clients to fail to respond to such questionnaires, particularly if they are administered by mail or telephone.

Short client satisfaction questionnaires can generally be scored by hand. However, longer questionnaires might require the use of computer processing and outside expert consultation.

Goal Attainment Scaling

Goal attainment scaling is a method of evaluating clients on their progress or achievement of specific individualized client goals. At the beginning of the intervention, both the client and the therapist/educator identify and negotiate specific intervention goals, assign weights to these goals according to their relative importance and form a scale of possible outcomes based on the grid-shaped form called a Goal Attainment Follow-Up Guide.

At the conclusion of the intervention, the client and the therapist/educator jointly decide to what extent the goals have been achieved. On the basis of this determination, a summary Goal Attainment score and a Goal Attainment Change score can be obtained.

An advantage to using Goal Attainment Scaling is that it is so closely connected with specific individual intervention goals. This tailored approach seems best suited to counseling but is by no means limited to counseling. Because of its flexibility as an evaluation approach, it seems that it could easily be adapted for use in an educational or self-help program.

Given the limited scope of this discussion, it is recommended that those interested in pursuing Goal Attainment Scaling further, contact the Program Evaluation Resource Center, 501 Park Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415. They have numerous materials and guides related to this technique.

Developing new measures to assess program effort, effectiveness and efficiency can be a difficult, time-consuming and costly endeavor. It generally demands the use of a consultant and often requires a pilot testing or "trial run" of the new instrument. Consequently, many times it is desirable to use an established measuring instrument as part of a program evaluation. Established instruments are generally commercially produced and can be bought from various publishing companies or can be obtained directly from the author(s).

Although there are many established tests and instruments available for use with adults and children, few are divorce or remarriage-specific and many require the use of computerized scoring or must be administered and interpreted by a trained psychometrician. The instruments presented in this section do not require computerized scoring and can be completed by the program participant. The majority of the instruments presented here do have a family focus and seem well suited for both a divorced and remarried population.

Because we do not present an exhaustive compilation of instruments that could be useful for an evaluation of a divorced or remarried intervention program, we refer the reader to the following texts that identify instruments for use with children, parents, and families.

Buros, O. Mental Measurements Yearbook, Sixth Edition, Highland Park, New Jersey: Gryphon Press, 1965.

Buros, O. Personality Tests and Reviews. Highland Park, New Jersey: Gryphon Press, 1970.

Johnson, O. G. Tests and Measurements in Child Development. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.

Robinson, J. P. and Shaver, P. R. Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, 1969.

Straus, M. A. and Brown, B. W. Family Measurement Techniques, Revised Edition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978.

Waskow, I. E. and Parloff, M. B. Psychotherapy Change Measures. Washington, D.C.: United State Government Printing Office, 1975.

It is often difficult to choose among the variety of established measurement instruments available. As a general rule, one chooses an instrument on the basis of its relevance to a particular program and that program's goals, and on the basis of demonstrated psychometric properties of the instrument. *Psychometric properties* generally refer to reliability and validity. Although a brief discussion of reliability and validity is presented in Appendix 10, the reader is referred to the following texts for a more thorough investigation of psychometric principles and techniques.

Kerlinger, F. N. *Foundations of Behavioral Research*, Second Edition, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973.

Nunnally, J. C. *Psychometric Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967.

There are currently available some established measurement instruments that are designed for use with families. Some are even focused on divorce or remarriage. These instruments are identified and described in Appendix 10.

To aid the reader in understanding the relationship between program goals, evaluation questions and appropriate measurement, the following example is provided.

One obvious overriding goal of a program for divorce or remarriage is to reduce the psychological stress experienced by family members. Related to this goal, the following evaluation questions could be asked:

(1) Are psychosomatic symptoms reduced?

(2) Are depressive reactions reduced?

(3) Do clients or program participants feel better in general?

To answer each of the questions, appropriate measurement is necessary. With regard to question (1), "Are psychosomatic symptoms reduced?", one could administer a symptom checklist to both the parents and children. An established instrument such as the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (Derogatis et al., 1974) could be used or one could develop an original checklist of psychosomatic symptoms.

With regard to question (2), "Are depressive reactions reduced?", the Child Depression Inventory (Kovacs & Beck, 1977) could be administered to the child and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (Fisher, 1975) could be administered to the parent. Observational reports of parent and child depressive reactions could also be obtained from the family counselor or educator. To answer the final evaluation question, (3) "Do clients or program participants feel better in general?", one could conduct an interview with family members and directly ask them how they generally feel in response to the family change, how they generally felt about the counseling, education, or peer support they received, and how they would like to feel in the future. Similar questions could be asked in a client satisfaction questionnaire.

Step 5: Data Collection and Management

The choice of data collection instruments greatly affects the time and cost of data collection and management. In most cases, the instruments should be well-structured and self-explanatory, requiring only a minimum of training on the part of the data collector. Most importantly, it is necessary to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data collection.

One method of approaching data collection is to identify each task and assign it to a particular person along with a task completion date. In general, who and how the data will be collected, administered, scored and reduced or summarized needs to be carefully indicated. Periodic monitoring will probably be necessary during this part of the evaluation program.

Step 6: Organize, Analyze and Interpret the Data

An adequate discussion of data analysis techniques, which generally involves statistics, is beyond the scope of this manual. However, some basic guidelines can be identified.

First, it is important that the sophistication of the analysis procedures generally matchs the information needs and the quality and amount of obtained data. Most programs cannot afford to collect a large amount of data and are probably well advised to select the less sophisticated techniques. In many cases, descriptive statistics such as averages, frequency distributions, and percentages are most useful.

In assessing the differences or change between pre-program and post-program scores, a different form of analysis (called inferential statistics) will be necessary. The reader is advised to seek a consultant or refer to the following text for more information on data analysis:

Kerlinger, F. N. Foundations of Behavioral Research, Second Edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973.

Regardless of the level of sophistication used in data analysis, one must consider the sophistication of the audience that will be reading and using the reports and write up the results accordingly. Report writing will now be discussed as the final step.

Step 7: Report the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

It is critical that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations be reported in a form that is usable by decision-makers and information users. This requires that the data be reported in as objective, complete, straightforward, and accurate a manner as possible.

If results turn out not to fit one's expectation or if "negative" results are found, it is important to report them. Negative results are just as important as positive ones in terms of helping the program improve its efficiency or effectiveness. It is also useful to point out how certain contaminating factors may have affected the study's conclusions.

In many cases, more than one report is needed. If there is a funding agency involved, a technical report that clearly delineates the research process is necessary. A decision-oriented report might be required by the program administration, Board of Directors, or Community Advisory Panel. In this report, findings upon which reommendations are based should be presented. This type of report is typically called an executive summary.

An informational report might be used to provide staff members with evidence of the value of their efforts. Finally, a report for the community and press which describes the program and its effect could be written and disseminated to the general public.

Weiss (1972)* has identified a number of constraints that limit the utilization of evaluation results: (a) the evaluator's definition of his/her role in the utilization process in such a way as to avoid an advocacy position, (b) organizational resistances to change, (c) the gap between evaluation results and action recommendations, and (d) the fact that many evaluations show little or no positive effect.

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*Weiss, C. Evaluation Research: Methods of Assessing Program Effectiveness. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

In order to overcome these constraints and to increase the likelihood that the evaluation results will be utilized, evaluations should follow the guidelines listed below.

1. Identify potential consumers of the evaluation at the outset and direct the content of the evaluation to their needs.

   Evaluators should determine who will be the users of the evaluation results. The involvement of these people should be solicited to clarify the objectives and criteria of the evaluation. In this way, evaluators can increase the likelihood that their findings are relevant and useful to the potential consumers.

2. Clarify initially the purposes of the evaluation wirh key persons involved and attempt to secure their commitment, contractual or understood, regarding the uses and possible consequences of the evaluation.

   Key persons may include the evaluator and his/her staff, the program director and his/her staff, and the persons with financial responsibility for the program. When recommendations have been derived from the study, these persons will be encouraged to endorse them.

3. The researcher should call to the practitioner's attention the possibility of slight or non-positive results.

   The tendency of evaluations to report negative results has been discussed extensively in the literature. One way of handling the resistance caused by this tendency is simply to inform administrators in advance of the possibility of slight or negative results.

4. Involve program staff in interpreting the results of the evaluation and in formulating the recommendations.

   The evaluator will discuss the key findings of the evaluation study with the program staff at all levels of the organization. This increases the staff's investment in the study, thereby making it more likely that they will implement the recommendations. Discussions with the staff also help the evaluator uncover indicators of how the results can be used and possible barriers to their use.

5. Build any proposed redirection of the program upon current activities with a gradual schedule of changeover to new approaches.

   Utilization of evaluation results is more likely if the proposed changes involve only moderate alterations in procedure, staff deployment, and costs. If results are made known in small doses and program changes are introduced gradually rather than abruptly, there is less likelihood of resistance to utilization.

6. Parsimony is essential in the evaluation process.

   Evaluators should be careful not to become bogged down in excessive collection and analysis of data that are irrelevant to the decisions to be made. The level of precision should be determined by the information needs identified at the outset of the evaluation.

7. Translate recommendations of an evaluation study into the actual procedural or organizational changes that might be developed to implement the evaluation.

   Interpretation of the reaults should focus on concrete applications to the appropriate program component. Evaluation is of little use to administrators and direct service staff if it focuses only on identifying general areas of success or failure without including specific proposals for change or improvement. Translating broad recommendations into actusl procedural changes may force evaluators to take into account organizational realities that may impede implementation of the proposed changes.

Potential Problems in Evaluating Divorce/Remarriage Programs

As with all kinds of research and program evaluation in the mental health field, there will be methodological problems and results will need to be interpreted with some caution. Divorce/remarriage program research, however, has some unique problems that should be considered. It should be noted that these problems become most obvious in outcome evaluation.

Because divorce is a time-limited crisis, it is extremely difficult to control for the emotional and personal adjustment that naturally occurs over time as the crisis passes. In a sense, the natural "healing" process is operating at the same time as the program and the effects of these two occurrences can be difficult to separate or differentiate. Because the initial stages of divorce are typically a highly emotional and variable time, many divorce-specific events are altered. For example, visitation or custody arrangements may be altered, financial situations tyipcally change as the custodial parent may find that s/he must be gainfully employed, or one's social life could be a series of ebbs and flows during the first year of the divorce. These events, many of which might occur during the course of the program and the evaluation, may also independently influence the variables being studied.

The effects of divorce as a time-limited crisis also influence statistical regression. Persons with extreme scores on a given variable (for example, depression) will tend to show less extremity in their scores upon repeat measurement irrespective of the existence of a program being studied or applied to them. It is predicted that persons going through a time-limited crisis such as divorce will, in fact, show extreme scores on many important variables.

The fact that all divorce/remarriage intervention programs are voluntary also influences the evaluation research. Those who voluntarily participate in such self-improvement programs probably possess greater motivation to change than do those who do not voluntarily participate. This self-selected sample can then bias the results. A related methodological problem is the attrition or "drop-out" rate. Those persons who complete the program are also more likely to be motivated to change than those who do not complete the program. For this reason, it is often useful to attempt to post-test program drop-outs as well as program completers.

Persons experiencing a personal life crisis often seek multiple forms of guidance and help. It is not unusual for an individual to seek both personal counseling and also participate in an educational program or a self-help group. In fact, this manual recommends multiple treatment approaches. However, what may be most beneficial clinically can be rather problematic methodologically. When several different programs are being offered to a person, it is difficult to measure the independent effects of each program. A related problem concerns the often changing nature of any single program. Programs, like people, also mature and change over time. This variance, while very beneficial for the improvement of the program, creates problems for the evaluation researcher who wants to identify a uniform treatment approach and its effects.

During the early stages of a program when it is changing most rapidly and dramatically, it can be very useful to have a narrative account of the program. This account, which would describe and document the changing characteristics of the program, could be of benefit to those who are planning similar programs elsewhere. While a program description such as this could be useful, it does not substitute for an evaluation.

A final problem with evaluating divorce-remarriage programs is that the model programs are designed to be "preventive." As such, it is difficult to definitively prove that a problem has been prevented as a result of the program if the problem does not appear. In this case, major efforts need to be directed toward demonstrating the cause-effect relationship between the program, the attainment of program goals, and the relationship between program goals and prevention.

Most of the methodological problems identified above can be partially controlled by using appropriate research designs and control or comparison groups. Randomization is perhaps the best method of dealing with these problems. However, randomization, which basically involves the random assignment of clients to interventions, is often difficult to do in mental health related research because many persons object to the process of denying treatment to someone in need or of not providing the "best" treatment available. In those cases where randomization is not possible, one should attempt to deliberately match clients in comparison groups on those variables considered important and unlikely to change as a result of the intervention (e.g., gender, age, race, income, number of children, length of marriage, and other demographic characteristics).

Evaluation studies require considerable time and expertise. It is suggested that, at the least, an outside expert be consulted. In many cases, however, agencies and programs prefer to hire an independent party to actually conduct the evaluation. The advantages and disadvantages of this will be discussed in the following section.

Insiders or Outsiders: Who Should Conduct the Evaluation?

Like many complicated issues, there is no definitive answer to the question of who should conduct the evaluation. Perhaps the best answer is one which takes into account each program's unique goals, resources, and staff backgrounds.

One of the advantages to using an insider is that the insider generally has access to much of the information that could be used in an evaluation. In addition, he or she probably has access to project personnel and a working knowledge of program operations. In some cases, the insider might be more trusted and other program personnel might feel less threatened by the evaluation.

Some of the disadvantages to using an insider is that this could create considerable pressure on the person who is responsible for filling two roles. Even if the insider were given a decreased workload with regard to his/her usual service delivery or administrative responsibilities, there could be considerable strain due to perceived or actual role conflict. The issue of "objectivity" is a concern, for the insider could be accused of having a vested interest in the outcome of the study and thus suspect of biasing the data or its interpretation.

There are several advantages and disadvantages to having an outside consultant conduct the evaluation. The consultant could remain "objective" and not be perceived as having a vested interest in the evaluation outcome. In addition, the outsider can exercise much more autonomy with regard to the study. He or she can remain free of perceived role conflict, can take on a wider perspective in interpretation, and may be able to ask questions that might have seemed disrespectful for an insider. Another advantage to hiring an outside consultant is that s/he can be selected on the basis of specialized skills needed for the program. In this sense, the outside evaluator may hold greater credibility with the program staff and may be able to have more impact with regard to the utilization of program results.

One of the major disadvantages to using an outsider is that she or he may simply not have a good understanding of the program and its operation. Consequently, some information collected may not really be needed and other information that is needed may not be collected. In addition, the evaluation may focus completely on the outsider and the investment of the staff with regard to the evaluation could be minimized. Finally, the cost of hiring an outsider could be prohibitive, particularly if the program is operating on very limited funds.

However, if a program does decide to hire an evaluation consultant, there are some guidelines to keep in mind. First, be sure to check the references of the individual being considered. The satisfaction of a former consultee is perhaps the best recommendation one can get. Second, it is important to draw up and sign a specific contract for services. This contract should list the services rendered, dates, and the amount of payment. Third, do not be afraid to ask questions. This is necessary in order to get the information needed from the evaluation. It might be helpful to read some sourcebooks on evaluation in order to become familiarized with the major concepts, approaches, and terminology. The following is a list of references for those who would like to explore the area of evaluation in more detail.

Bennett, C. A., & Lumsdaine, A. A. (Eds.). *Evaluation and experiment: Some critical issues in assessing social programs*. New York: Academic Press, 1975.

Bloom, B. S., Hastings, J. T., & Madaus, G. F. *Handbook of formative and summative evaluation*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Caro, F. G. (Ed.). *Readings in evaluation research*. New York: Russell Sage, 1971.

Hagedorn, H. J., Beck, K. J., Neubert, S. F., & Werlin, S. H. *A working manual of simple program evaluation techniques for community mental health centers*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1976.

Heilman, J. G. *Evaluation: A practical guide for evaluators of social action projects*. The Office of Public Service and Research, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, 1977.

Isaac, S. *Handbook in research and evaluation*. San Diego, California: Robert R. Knapp, 1971.

Rossi, P. H., & Williams, W. (Eds.). *Evaluating social programs*. New York: Seminar Press, 1972.

Suchman, E. A. *Evaluation research: Principles and practice in public service and social action programs*. New York: Russell Sage, 1967.

Tripodi, T., Fellin, P., & Epstein, I. *Social program evaluation*. Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock, 1971.

Weiss, C. H. *Evaluation research*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

APPENDIX 1

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Fiction for Children: Preschool and Beginning Readers

Adams, F. Mushy eggs. Putnam's, 1973.

The story of a family managing well after divorce. (PWP)*

Clifton, L. Everett Anderson's friend. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1976.

Everett's mother is angry because he lost his housekey. He thinks about what his father might have said if he had been there. The conclusion to the book is positive. (PWP revised)

Eichler, M. Martin's father. Lollipop Power, 1971.

This book presents the daily life of a boy who lives with his father. It could serve to encourage open communication between children and single-parent fathers. (AIR)

Goff, B. Where is Daddy? The story of a divorce. Beacon Press, 1969.

A little girl learns not to blame herself for her parents' divorce. Alhough the story has been criticized as too sad, it may be useful in stimulating discussion of a young child's fears. (PWP revised)

Kindred, W. Lucky Wilma. Dial Press, 1973.

A loving father visits his young daughter every Saturday. Demonstrates how important visitation and shared time are to youngsters. (PWP revised)

Lexau, J. Emily and the klunky baby and the next door dog. Dial Press, 1972.

Emily's feelings of being neglected after her parents' divorce are finally resolved. There are good messages for parents in this book. (PWP)

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*(PWP): Credit to Information Center, Parents Without Partners.

Rand, D. I'm going to visit my Daddy. Academic Therapy, 1977.

Nicely illustrated book for young children who go on an airplane trip to visit their father. (PWP revised)

Rogers, H. S. Morris and his brave lion. McGraw-Hill, 1975.

This book presents a good treatment of divorce to the young child; however, the unrealistic story ending may give false hopes to a child who wishes his or her parents to reunite. (PWP revised)

Surowiecki, S. Joshua's day. Lollipop Power, 1972.

Joshua is coping with living with his mother and going to a Day Care Center. A positive, specific book. (PWP)

Thomas, I. Eliza's Daddy. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.

The young heroine has feelings about her father's remarriage that are eased by revisiting the new family. Jealousy and fears are resolved in this Let Me Read book. (PWP)

Zindel, P. I love my Mother. Harper and Row, 1975.

The non-stereotyped story of a small boy and his single parent mother. (PWP revised)

Nonfiction for Children: Preschool and Beginning Readers

Pursell, M. S. A look at divorce. Lerner, 1976.

Text and photographs describe the changes children and parents may make following divorce. Attitudes expressed in the book are generally positive. The pictures make it a good book to read and discuss with small children. (PWP revised)

Sinberg, J. Divorce is a grown up problem. Avon, 1978.

This book can be read aloud to very young children. It includes simple black and white drawings, a preface for parents, and a bibliography. (PWP)

Fiction for Children: Elementary School Ages

Anker, C. Last night I saw Andromeda. Walch, 1975.

Eleven-year-old Jenny discovers she really needn't try so hard to earn her divorced father's love and appreciation. (PWP)

Blue, R. A month of Sundays. Franklin Watts, 1972.

This is the story of a 10-year-old's adjustment to living with his mother and visiting his father. In the process of illustrating how painful conventional custody and visitation can be, the book presents some stereotyped ideas regarding the role of women. (AIR)

Blume, J. It's not the end of the world. Bradbury Press, 1972.

Karen and her sister cope with their feelings after their parents' divorce. This book is helpful for those experiencing similar situations. (PWP)

Clymer, E. Luke was there. Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1973.

It seemed that whenever Julius began to rely on an adult, something would go wrong. His father left, his mother was in the hospital, and he had to stay in a children's home. He develops a secure relationship with Luke, a social worker. (PWP)

Ewing, K. A private matter. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.

Marcy must give up her dream father, an elderly man next door, for the reality of her mother's second husband. (PWP)

Hunter, E. Me and Mr. Stenner. Lippincott, 1976.

This is the story of an 11-year-old girl coping with her mother's divorce and remarriage. She learns to accept the new man who her mother will marry, and finds that she can love her stepfather and real father at the same time. (AIR)

Jones, C. Cat called Camouflage. S. G. Phillips, 1971.

After finally beginning to adjust to her new home, Ruth begins to suspect her parents might reconcile. She wants this, but also fears it. There is very little frank discussion between parent and child in this book. (PWP)

Lisker, S. *Two special cards*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.

The story of a young girl who feels angry and afraid when her parents fight with one another and talk about divorce. She then finds ways to make the best of having separated parents. The story portrays loving parents in a realistic way. (AIR)

Madison, W. *Marinka, Katinka and me (Susie)*. Bradbury Press, 1975.

This story portrays friendship among three fourth-grade girls whose non-traditional families are accepted as they are. Susie's father is dead, Marinka's parents are divorced, and Katinka's father is in prison. Realistic problems, including divorce, are put in perspective. (PWP)

Mann, P. *My Dad lives in a downtown hotel*. Doubleday, 1973.

Since both parents are careful to assure him they do not blame one another for their divorce, Joey concludes that *he* is the cause. Gradually Joey learns to face reality and cope with life as it is. (PWP)

Newfield, M. *A book for Jodan*. Atheneum, 1975.

Jodan, age nine, doesn't believe her parents' reassurances of their love for her after their separation. Both parents work to promote her constructive adjustment, even though her father lives across the country. The book details an excellent, creative project for fathers. (PWP)

Norris, G. *Lillian*. Atheneum, 1968.

Many will identify with Lillian's fear that a mother's full time job will damage her relationship with her daughter. With mother's help, Lillian becomes more self-reliant and able to meet the needs of the situation. (PWP)

Sitea, L. "Zachary's divorce" in *Free to be me*. McGraw Hill, 1974.

This entire book is an absolutely delightful look at children's emotions and values aimed at self-acceptance. Zachary's story about 'his' divorce is simple, but captures the feelings of a small boy. (PWP)

Wagner, J. *J. T.* Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969.

A boy has a difficult time adapting to the changes and problems heightened by his father's absence. Outsiders, including a cat, help him to adjust. (PWP revised) .

Warren, M. P. The haunted kitchen. Westminster Press, 1976.

After the divorce, Dad decides to go back to school. He and his three children move to Oregon and live in what appears to be a haunted house. Children coping together and working cooperatively are portrayed. (PWP)

Nonfiction for Children: Elementary School Ages

Berger, T. How does it feel when your parents get divorced? Messner, 1977.

In this narrative a little girl discusses her feelings about her parents' divorce. Although she experiences anger, fear, and frustration, she finds that it is still possible to be happy. The text is accompanied by photographs. (AIR)

LeShan, E. What makes me feel this way? Macmillan, 1972.

In this book, emotions are identified and discussed in terms that children can understand. A book for parents and children to read together. (PWP)

LeShan, E. What's going to happen to me? When parents separate or divorce. Four Winds, 1979.

This book offers children a positive approach to divorce. The inclusion of numerous anecdotes serves to assuage children's loneliness and fears. The author stresses that divorce is never the fault of the child, and that parents should not try to keep a bad marriage together. Anecdotes on remarriage are included as well. The book may help children to discuss feelings about divorce with parents. (AIR)

Fiction for Adolescents
(through 9th grade)

Alexander, A. To live a lie. Atheneum, 1975.

This is the tale of a 12-year old who imagines herself unloved and unwanted by divorcing parents. She lies, telling people that her mother is dead, instead of acknowledging that she lives with her father and her mother is going to college. (AIR)

Arundel, H. A family failing. Thomas Nelson, 1972.

A girl grows up after her parents' separation by learning to view her parents as people who are separate from herself. This story is set in Scotland. (PWP revised)

Bach, A. A father every few years. Harper, 1977.

Schemes and searches are used to try to find Tim's stepfather. Finally, Tim and his mother realize that they have been deserted and must learn to go on living without him. (AIR)

Butterworth, W. E. Steve Bellamy. Little, Brown and Co., 1970.

After his mother and stepfather are killed in an auto accident, Steve goes to live with his father, whom he has never met. A book for children learning to accept new ways and new places. (PWP)

Carlson, D. Triple boy. Atheneum, 1977.

Paul retreats to the safety of a split personality after his parents divorce and his little brother dies. Understanding friends, professional help, and his strong will help to get him back together. (AIR)

Cleaver, V., & Cleaver, B. Ellen Grae. Lippincott, 1967.

A girl survives the aftermath of her parents' divorce, even though she does not live with either of them. The divorce itself is not handled in this tale set in Appalachia. (PWP)

Green, C. A girl called Al. Viking, 1969.

Alexandra is unhappy and finds that her father's money for support is no substitute for his love. This story is useful if other books are read to give a more positive perspective. (PWP)

Green, C. I know you Al. Viking, 1975.

The sequel to the preceding in which Al attends her father's wedding. (PWP)

Gripe, M. The night Daddy. Delacorte Press, 1971.

The young heroine, whose mother works at night, becomes friends with the baby sitter. (PWP revised)

Holland, I. The man without a face. Lippincott, 1972.

A somewhat controversial story about a much divorced mother and her family. Charlie has quite a time adjusting, but is helped by his friendship with an older man. (PWP)

Holland, I. Of love and death and other journeys. Lippincott, 1975.

After a nomadic existence with only her mother, Meg learns that her mother is dying and that she must live with her father, whom she does not remember. After a bad start, her relationship with him improves as both talk honestly about their feelings. (PWP)

Klein, N. It's not what you expect. Pantheon, 1973.

A "liberated" family weathers dad's three-month absence. (PWP)

Klein, N. Mom, the Wolfman and me. Pantheon, 1972.

Brett and her mother, who has never been married, live a happy, non-traditional life. Brett begins to worry when her mother starts dating and may marry. (PWP)

Klein, N. Taking sides. Pantheon, 1974.

Real people cope with separation after remarriage. The father is portrayed as a nurturing person in this story. (PWP)

Klein, N. What's it all about? Dial Press, 1975.

Many complicated family changes confront a 10-year-old girl, including a stepfather who leaves when an adopted sister joins the family. (PWP)

Mazer, H. Guy Lenny. Delacorte Press, 1971.

Twelve-year-old Guy lives with his father and rebels mightily when the latter wishes to remarry. His father decides that Guy should live with his mother, at least for a while. Harsh realities following divorce are portrayed in this book. (PWP)

Mazer, N. I, Trissy. Delacorte, 1971.

Trissy uses her typewriter to vent frustrations about her parents' divorce and the problems brought on by her selfishness and unwillingness to understand her parents. Finally she begins to question her own identity and becomes better able to face these troubles. (PWP)

McHargue, G. Stoneflight. Viking Press, 1975.

Janie suspected a divorce but no one would talk to her. She wished she were like the invulnerable stone Griffon. Through her uncle, she becomes included in family discussions of the problem. (PWP)

Naylor, P. No easy circle. Follet, 1972.

Teenagers whose parents have divorced will identify with the young girl in this story as she faces problems with her peers as well as her parents. (AIR)

Neville, E. C. Garden of broken glass. Delacorte, 1975.

Thirteen-year-old Brian grows in awareness of others as he finds ways to live despite an absent father and an alcoholic mother. This book is considered outstanding by the Child Study Association of America. (PWP)

Perl, L. The telltale summer of Tina C. Seabury Press, 1975.

Trying to untangle the confusing relationships of divorce and remarriage, Tina begins to understand her loved ones. The story portrays positive, open relationships with both parents. (PWP)

Pevsner, S. A smart kid like you. Seabury Press, 1975.

A realistic view of some of the after-effects of divorce. Nina finds her new math teacher is her father's new wife. (PWP)

Pfeffer, S. B. Marly the kid. Doubleday & Co., 1975.

During her sophomore year, Marly acts courageously. She decides to live with her father instead of her mother and also refuses to tolerate insulting remarks from her history teacher. The stepmother in this story is an even-tempered, positive figure. (PWP)

Platt, K. The boy who could make himself disappear. Chilton, 1968.
Also Chloris and the creeps.

These are two complicated, unusual and somewhat painful stories about young people coping with divorce and remarriage. There is partial resolution of extremely negative situations and behavior. They are not recommended for those actually experiencing the acute stages of loss. (PWP)

Sachs, M. The bear's house. Doubleday, 1971.

Ghastly and emotional situations confront a young girl and her older brother who take responsibility for the younger children and their mentally ill mother after their father leaves. Painful to read, but value may lie in readers' realizing that others have terrible problems too. (PWP revised)

Sheffield, J. N. Not just sugar and spice. William Morrow and Co., 1975.

Lani is jealous, selfish and losing friends rapidly. Only to get rid of a domineering housekeeper does she decide to pull herself together, cooperate with her future stepfather, and help out while her mother is in the hospital. (PWP)

Smith, D. Kick a stone home. Crowell, 1974.

After three years, Sara Jane still hopes her father will come back. She hates visiting him and his new wife and has no one with whom to share her feelings. Gradually, her negativism and resentment toward the remarriage soften. A positive portrayal of real people is presented. (PWP)

Snyder, Z. K. Headless cupid. Atheneum, 1971.

Fun and intrigue result when stepbrothers and sisters begin adjusting to each other and to their new parents. (PWP)

Stolz, M. Leap before you look. Harper & Row, 1972.

The young heroine lives with her mother and has difficulty adjusting to her father's remarriage. A friend helps her to reconcile her feelings. (PWP)

Sullivan, M. Blue grass Iggy. Nelson, 1975.

Iggy makes friends in the trailer camp where he lives with his father. (PWP)

Thorval, K. And Leffe was instead of a dad. Bradbury Press, 1974.

Magnus' mother lives with Leffe, who becomes the dad that Magnus always wanted. When Leffe begins drinking again, there is the chance that he will leave or break parole. An unusual story told with warmth and understanding, translated from the Swedish original. (PWP)

Wolitzer, H. Out of love. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1976.

Two years after the divorce, Teddy is still scheming to reunite her parents, through illness and by crusading to better her mother's appearance. Acceptance of the divorce as final is a painful experience for her. (PWP revised)

Nonfiction for Adolescents

Gardner, R. A. The boys and girls book about divorce. New York: Jason Aronson, 1970

Common problems which confront school-age and adolescent children of divorced parents are presented to the child, along with suggestions of ways to solve, deal with, or adapt to difficulties. A chapter entitled, 'How to Get Along Better With Your Stepfather and Stepmother' is included. (NIMH)*

Hautzig, E. Life with working parents. Macmillan, 1976.

Practical hints for children in everyday situations. Since routines may change after separation and divorce, the book may be useful for single parent families. Individual families may wish to do things differently, but it can be used as a starting point for family discussions. (PWP)

Kalb, J., & Viscott, D. What every kid should know. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976.

Practical discussions which direct children trying to understand their feelings, inadequacies, relationships with parents and friends, and their parents' divorce. Includes a Bill of Rights for Kids with corresponding responsibilities. Worthwhile for parents, as well. (PWP)

LeShan, E. You and your feelings. Macmillan, 1975.

A guide for young people to better understand their feelings and their relationships with others. A good book for junior high level. (PWP)

Richards, A. & Willis, I. How to get it together when your parents are coming apart. New York: David McKay, 1976.

This book provides advice to teenagers who are coping with their parents' marital troubles, separation, and divorce. While the book is addressed to adolescents, it is useful for parents, social workers, lawyers, teachers, and clergy as well. Feelings, legalities, rights and adjustments involved in divorce are discussed frankly, with an emphasis on encouraging adolescents to be aware of feelings, develop and utilize coping skills, and take responsibility for their own lives. (AIR)

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*(NIMH): Credit to National Institute of Mental Health Publications.

Audiovisual Resources for Children and Youth

Children of divorce: Transitional issues for elementary school age. Falls Church, Virginia: American Personnel and Guidance Association. (Film, 12 minutes)

This is a stimulus vignette film intended for use directly with children in group situations, and for courses and training in counseling elementary school age children. The scenes raise issues encountered by children whose parents are getting divorced or who are entering into new family relationships. Reactions of children in these anxiety-producing situations are highlighted. Leader's Guide available. (Source)*

Children of divorce: Transitional issues for junior high and high school ages. Falls Church, Virginia: American Personnel and Guidance Association. (Film, 12 minutes)

A stimulus vignette film intended for use directly with adolescents in group situations and for courses and training in counseling of junior high and high school age children. Each scene presents an anxiety-provoking situation for a teenager that is brought about by one of the many issues raised when parents are divorcing or beginning new relationships. Leader's Guide available. (Source)

Family album. Indiana University, 1971. (Film, 10 minutes)

Four family members (mother, father, adolescent son and daughter) discuss the impact that divorce has had upon each of them. The mother and father discuss the events leading up to their divorce and reactions to their new-found independence. Their children discuss the impact that the divorce has had on their own lives. Home movies and photographs summarize the marriage. This film is appropriate for either an adolescent or adult population. (AIR)

Feeling left out: A film about divorce. AIMS Instructional Media Services, Inc. (15 minutes)

This film is designed to help children through the period of adjustment to divorce that involves feelings of isolation and depression. Positive ideas are depicted, such as the facts that nobody is the "bad guy," and sometimes people are better off and happier when they aren't together. (Source)

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*(Source): Producer or Distributor

Honeymoon. New York: ACI Media. (Film, 9 minutes)

This film depicts the adjustment of a young girl to her mother's remarriage. The girl is initially resentful and feels deserted when her mother and new stepfather go on their honeymoon. During this time, she becomes close to her stepbrother and is ready to accept her new family. The film is designed for presentation at the elementary school age level. (AIR)

Me and Dad's new wife. New York: Time-Life Films. (Film, 33 minutes)

Twelve-year-old Nina discovers on her first day back to school that her new math teacher is her divorced father's new wife. The film provides insight into feelings of guilt, anger, and insecurity, while treating a topic of widespread concern. (Source)

The sky is falling. Port Washington, New York: Port Washington Union Free School District. (Slides, cassette; 20 minutes)

Sixty-five slides and a cassette serve to initiate discussion about divorce among elementary school age children. Brightly colored cartoon slides present the separation of a "typical" couple, and the resulting impact upon their two children. Feelings of grief, loneliness, anger, rejection, guilt, and stigmatization are expressed by the cartoon children. A session with a psychologist and other children of divorce follows, with slides depicting the children discussing the negative and positive changes in their lives as the therapist offers commentary and support. This presentation was initially created as part of a program for children of divorce, and is now available for use by similar programs. (AIR)

Things are different now. Solana Beach, California: The Media Guild. (Film, 15 minutes)

This film explores the impact of divorce on a 12-year-old black boy. The approach, which is straightforward and hopeful, stresses positive change for the boy. (AIR)

Understanding changes in the family: Not together anymore. White Plains, New York: Guidance Associates, Inc. (Cassette, filmstrip; 15 minutes)

Vignettes are presented that depict some common reactions of children to divorce, such as confusion, guilt and sadness. Narration supplements the vignettes, and explains that divorce often results when parents argue chronically. The fact that children can't do anything to bring their parents back together is emphasized. Few positive parent/child interactions are depicted. (AIR)

What if a crisis hits your family? My parents are divorced. Jamaica, New York: Eye Gate Media. (Filmstrip, cassette)

Children's feelings about divorce and visitation are presented. The filmstrip begins with two children going away for the weekend with their father, and then traces their thoughts back to the pre-divorce family tensions, reactions to divorce, and present feelings about the new family situation. (AIR)

Nonfiction for Adults: Single Parents and Stepparents

Atkin, E., & Rubin, E. Part-time father. New York: Vanguard Press, 1976.

Based on their observations as therapists to children of all social strata, the authors give common-sense advice directed at the divorced father without custody of his children. The book deals with a variety of emotional and day-to-day problems a father and his children must adjust to during the different stages of children's development and altered family life. Focus is placed on the continuing potential opportunities for a fulfilling relationship between the father and his children. Of particular interest are the chapters on remarriage and the extended family containing step-relations. (NIMH)

Baer, J. The second wife. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972.

The author gathered information from 220 interviews with white middle-class second wives, a questionnaire survey of 100 female members of Remarrieds, Inc., and personal observation and experience. It is a journalist's report on the mores, experiences, problems, and solutions of second wives. Suggests ways to succeed as a 'week-end stepmother' and as 'the full-time mother.' Contains an Appendix listing the currently active organizations formed to fight for divorce reform, groups that give counsel to remarrieds, and a bibliography. (NIMH)

Barman, A. Helping children face crises. Rockville, Maryland: Public Affairs Committee, National Institute of Mental Health, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976.

This pamphlet describes what a crisis might be for a child and how it can best be handled by a parent. Issues covered include children's reactions to crises, the need for the parent to share truth, discuss family problems, and include children in grieving. Crises discussed include death in the family (of a parent, sibling, or other relative), separation and divorce, the child's own illness, starting school, and going away from home. (AIR)

Baruth, L. G. A single parent's survival guide: How to raise the children. Kendall/Hunt, 1979.

This helpful book focuses on child-rearing practices and offers sound democratic principles based on Dreikur's Children the challenge. Useful for anyone raising children alone and needing to win cooperation in sharing household responsibilities and to encourage children to feel good about themselves. (PWP)

Despert, J. L. Children of divorce. Doubleday, 1962. Avon Pb.

An older classic with some good advice. (PWP)

de Vienne, D. (Ed.). Stepparents' forum. Canada: Montreal, 1975.

This newsletter, published bi-monthly, offers support and guidance to stepparents to help them better understand their role and to function more effectively within it. Sections include: 'Insights,' where stepparents share what they've learned; 'Professionally Speaking,' a page devoted to relevant research on divorce, remarriage, and step-relationships; 'Books,' an up-to-date listing of recent works; 'Stepchildren Talk Back,' quotes and comments from young people who have experienced the stepchild role. Each issue also contains special features such as first-person stories and articles by professionals. (NIMH)

Duffin, S. R. Yours, mine & ours: Tips for stepparents. Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Institute of Mental Health, 1978.

Advice is given to those who are contemplating remarriage. Tips are provided to ease stepparents through the processes of preparing for remarriage, to assist them in handling stepchildren, and a number of other challenges that stepparents may face. (AIR)

Espinoza, R., & Newman, Y. Stepparenting. Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Institute of Mental Health, 1979.

The major purpose of this booklet is to describe and organize existing information about stepfamilies. An extensive review of the existing research and scholarly literature includes the demography of stepfamilies, stepparents and their children, as well as special problems of stepfamilies (e.g., myths, money, discipline, and guilt). The booklet is appropriate for professionals as well as other adults interested in learning about the common problems associated with stepparenting. An annotated bibliography is included. (AIR)

Galper, M. Co-parenting: A sourcebook for the separated or divorced family. Philadelphia: Running Press, 1978.

A very practical discussion of joint custody is presented in this book, including how to organize scheduling, finances, and children's possessions in an equitable manner. The continued relationship between ex-spouses, as well as parent/child adjustment issues, are discussed. Financial and custody agreements written by co-parents serve as examples of the shared custody approach. (AIR)

Gardner, R. The parent's book about divorce. New York: Doubleday, 1977.

This practical book is intended as a guide for divorcing parents to help them deal with the most common reactions of children. Topics include advice to parents contemplating divorce; how, when, and what children should be told about divorce; early post-separation adjustment; common parental difficulties that contribute to children's post-separation maladjustments; children's involvement with others; and changes that may reduce the divorce rate and the suffering of those involved. (AIR)

Gettleman, S., & Markowitz, J. The courage to divorce. Simon and Schuster, 1974.

The authors attempt to dispell fears that children are permanently damaged by divorce, that parents should feel guilty, or that children should be pitied. They look on divorce as a liberation and an opportunity for increased personal growth for both adults and children. (PWP)

Grollman, E. Talking about divorce: A dialogue between parent and child. Beacon Press, 1975.

A book written to facilitate discussion between parents and children. It includes resources and sources for further information. (PWP)

Krantzler, M. Creative divorce. M. Evans & Co., 1974.

Refreshing yet realistic assessment of children's reactions to divorce. Children, too, must mourn the 'death of the parents' relationship.' The author tells what to expect, how long negative reactions might last, and relates some tested ideas about how to improve relationships with children. The author feels it may be a positive event and hopefully an opportunity for growth for all concerned. (PWP)

Maddox, B. The half-parent: Living with other people's children. New York: M. Evans, 1975.

The author interviewed nearly 100 stepparents and interviewed or corresponded with professionals in the area of stepparenting both in the United States and England. Professional sources have been well-documented. The author, a journalist and stepmother, focuses on what she sees as a central characteristic of step-relationships: rivalry. This, she feels, should be acknowledged and understood. She also discusses adoption, legal obligations and rights of the stepparent, sexual attractions within the stepfamily, differences between adoption and stepparenthood, grandparents, the dead or absent partner, and discipline. She concludes that it's harder to follow a dead mother than a divorced one, and advocates a more honest appraisal of the stepfamilies' true characteristics. (NIMH)

Reingold, C. Remarriage. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

This book, whose author is a happily remarried woman, goes beyond facts and figures directly to people. It is primarily a collection of first-person stories; real people talking about spouses and ex-spouses, children and stepchildren, money, lawyers, friends, relatives, and themselves. A psychiatrist and a lawyer, who specialize in matrimonial cases, comment throughout. The book does not attempt to offer advice or answer questions, and clearly shows that no two remarriages are alike. It does, however, recognize and encourage new lifestyles, new relationships, and the basic need to seek emotional fulfillment. (NIMH)

Roman, R., & Haddad, W. The disposable parent: The case for joint custody. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978.

This book explores relatively new alternatives to parenting in the divorced family. It rejects theories that the mother should generally have full custody of the children on the grounds that such ideas enshrine or enslave women to an unrealistic degree. The primary message of the book is that parenting responsibilities should be shared, no matter who is awarded custody. (AIR)

Roosevelt, R., & Lofas, J. Living in step. New York: Stein and Day, 1976.

Directed primarily at the middle-class lay person already living in step or contemplating remarriage involving children, this book realistically defines the problems inherent in the step-relationship and offers practical solutions. The authors, themselves step-people, explore the expectations and realities of 'step' living (parent and child). Most of their conclusions are based on interviews with stepfamilies and personal experience rather than on scientific research or data. From this they reach a basic truth--the couple must come first; the needs of children and ex-spouses must have subordinate priority if the 'new' family unit is to succeed. (NIMH)

Salk, L. What every child would like parents to know about divorce. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.

This book is intended to help parents who are experiencing a divorce know how children are affected by and react to the event. Included is advice on how to tell children about divorce, and how to deal with the reactions of children, friends, and relatives. Issues concerning custody, life after divorce, and how to view divorce as a learning experience are included. Although the book primarily focuses upon parent issues, advice is provided to help adults deal with the entire divorce experience. (AIR)

Simon, A. *Stepchild in the family. A view of children in marriage*. New York: Odyssey Press, 1964.

A professional journalist's review and personal experience of the problems of stepchildren. A sensitive and comprehensive book on the problems of bereavement and divorce. It is considered a classic and very much worth reading. Her tone throughout is hopeful, and she emphasizes the opportunities of new relations in combination families. (NIMH)

Thomson, H. *The successful stepparent*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

This book is written from a social work perspective and gives case examples. It is a practical guide for stepparents, written in clear popular style. It offers suggestions for handling situations such as: introduction of new parent to child, typical childhood problems to be expected, dealing with visitation of the biological parent, expressing feelings, discipline, jealousy, adoption, and custody. (NIMH)

Turow, R. *Daddy doesn't live here anymore*. Greatlakes, 1977, Anchor, 1978.

A sensitive guide for divorced parents with many practical suggestions. It is useful for parents to read this book along with other literature for divorced parents. (PWP)

Victor, I., & Winkler, A. *Fathers and custody*. Hawthorn Books, 1977.

The experience of the father as both custodial and visiting parent is described. The positive benefits of both father/child relationships are explored. The book lists a number of resources, and includes information about legal problems and support groups. (AIR)

Visher, E. & Visher, J. *Stepfamilies: A guide to working with stepparents and stepchildren*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979.

Although this book is written primarily for clinicians, it is useful to any others involved in advising stepfamilies, and may be helpful to stepparents. Included is an examination of the cultural and structural characteristics of stepfamilies, and the available research literature. Stepparent roles are described as well as the "recoupling" process and the role of children in stepfamilies. Therapeutic techniques are described throughout. (AIR)

Weiss, R. S. *Marital separation*. New York: Basic Books, 1975.

This book offers discussion and verbatim reports of the social and psychological realities of ending a marriage and parenting alone. Selections typify positive as well as less successful ways of coping with the end of a marriage and the beginning of single parenthood. What comes through is the excessive sensitivity of the custodial parent to signs of behavior problems, and the overload of roles, tasks, and responsibilities. Suggestions for easing single parent burdens are included, such as the need for the parent to involve him or herself in activities that offer time away from children. (PWP revised)

Weiss, R. S. Going it alone. New York: Basic Books, 1979.

This book extensively examines the family life and social situation of the single parent through verbatim reports and discussion by the author. Aspects of the life of a single parent as both parent and person are treated in depth, including managing a household, raising children of different ages, establishing a community, and maintaining a personal life and parental responsibility. (AIR)

Woolley, P. The custody handbook. New York: Summit Books, 1979.

This practical guide for divorcing parents offers current information about how custody battles can be avoided. Views of traditional custody arrangements by mothers and fathers are included. Although the author is an advocate of joint custody, the book is appropriate for parents interested in other custody arrangements as well. (AIR)

Audiovisual Resources for Parents, Adults

Chlorae and Albie. Newton, Massachusetts: Education Development Center. (Film, 36 minutes)

Two black women in their 20s try to put their lives back together with wit and courage. One is divorced, has three children, and is going back to high school so that she can go into nursing. The other is putting herself through college after many false starts. (Source)

Chris and Bernie: A film about single mothers. New York: Pandora Films. (Film, 25 minutes)

This film depicts actual scenes from the lives of two 25-year-old single mothers who are divorced. The film explores their problems, solutions, and hopes for the future through use of actual footage, music montage, and stills from their past. , (AIR)

Divorce: For better, for worse. New York: McGraw-Hill Films. (Film, 49 minutes)

A documentary focusing on actual case histories to show why there are desperate needs for legal reforms, stricter regulations on counselors and therapists, and greater public awareness regarding emotional and financial problems facing divorced persons. (Source)

Divorce: Part I. Falls Church, Virginia: American Personnel and Guidance Association. (Film, 20 minutes)

This film focuses on emotional issues, issues with family and friends, and issues relating to starting new relationships. Vignettes are used to examine problems of personal identity and the stigma of divorce. Central issues are: regaining confidence, channeling the energy of anger and guilt, coping with the emotionality of divorce, and letting go. Issues with family and friends revolve around confronting faulty assumptions and stereotypes, and dealing with guilt-inducing statements. Also portrayed are the problems that friends have in addressing the recently divorced and/or inviting them to parties. Issues of new relationships are emphasized, including the fear of getting involved, uncertainty about current single world protocol, and excitement of new opportunities. Instructor's Manual available. (Source)

Divorce: Part II. Falls Church, Virginia: American Personnel and Guidance Association. (Film, 20 minutes)

This film focuses on the intertwined issues of relating to the ex-spouse and problems of children. These include handling the feelings of being a single parent, communicating with the former spouse before and after divorce, handling the emotions of the children, and relating to the former spouse's new boyfriend or girlfriend. Instructor's Manual available. (Source)

Divorce and separation: Marriages in trouble. White Plains, New York: Guidance Associates, Inc. (2 filmstrips, 2 cassettes; 41 minutes)

Divorce and single parenthood are explored through vignettes describing the experiences of several families. In Part I, adults discuss issues that led to their decisions to divorce, and problems encountered while going through the divorce process. In Part II, single parents, adolescents, and children discuss changes in the family brought about by the divorce, emotional reactions, and common problems of the single-parent family. The presentation is appropriate for both adults and high school age adolescents. Teacher's Guide included. (AIR)

First Year A.D. Los Angeles, California: Franciscan Communications Center. (Film, 14 minutes)

A recently divorced couple discovers that signing the final papers does not entirely signal the end of their relationship. They find that they must learn to respect and trust each other as parents of a child who still needs love from both of them and who must not be used as a pawn between them. (Source)

How about Saturday? Schiller Park, Illinois: MTI Teleprograms, Inc. (Film, 20 minutes)

This is a film for parents and professionals that emphasizes the child's experience and point of view. Divorce is presented as something that involves the entire family, not just the adults. The importance of dealing with the child effectively is stressed. (AIR)

Mothers after divorce. Boston, Massachusetts: Polymorph Films. (Film, 20 minutes)

Four suburban women with high school age children talk openly about their new lives, the disruption that their divorces caused, and their feelings of rejection and loneliness. They also discuss the positive aspects of their divorces, such as strengthened relationships with their children, and the challenges of managing both job and family. (Source)

Not together now. Boston, Massachusetts: Polymorph Films. (Film, 25 minutes)

A separated couple speaks candidly in this film about why they married and the events in their relationship that led to a decision to separate. The film deals with the nature of marriage and the experience of being alone afterwards. (AIR)

Single parent. Venice, California: The American Film Institute/Institute for the Study of Human Issues. (Film, 40 minutes)

Everyday scenes are depicted in the home of a single-parent mother of three children. The mother's demands on her children, her own overload of responsibilities, and open and covert anger by family members are clearly expressed. The mother's attempts to establish new relationships are also depicted. (AIR)

Stepparenting: New families, old ties. Boston: Polymorph Films. Film, 25 minutes)

Families, professionals, and a stepparent support group are interviewed in order to reveal some of the problems of stepparenting and the way parents deal with them. Issues such as becoming an instant parent, blending two families, and leaving one family behind to care for a new one are discussed. (AIR)

APPENDIX 2

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANUAL

Most programs serving divorcing families and youth report that public relations efforts are critical to the success of their services. This is partly because these programs are designed to help all families that are dealing with divorce-related problems and not just those families that are experiencing severe problems. Consequently, the programs have to publicize the fact that any family undergoing divorce can and should avail itself of their services. That is, the programs first need to reduce possible misconceptions about the nature of their programs before they can even begin to routinely publicize the availability of their services. Because of this dual need for effective public relations, the staff of many of these programs must frequently make presentations both in person, before groups such as educators and parents, and also in the mass media, for example, television and radio.

Since continual public relations efforts are vital to the success of these programs, a primer on public relations techniques should prove useful to those wishing to implement the intervention programs for divorced or remarried families. In the following pages, general guidelines are presented for the effective use of both the mass media (newspapers, radio, and television) and community media (flyers, posters, brochures, local newsletters, and club or church bulletins). Then, very specific rules are listed for sending out press releases, calling press conferences, preparing public service announcements, distributing flyers and posters, mailing brochures, and using other avenues of publicity.

Two factors are important to keep in mind when planning a publicity program. Analyzing the target audience, the first step mentioned in the guidelines, is perhaps the most crucial factor in a successful public relations effort. The programs must decide whom they are trying to reach and then must match both their message and medium to that target audience. For example, studies show that lower socioeconomic groups rarely read newspapers; they tend instead to rely on television and radio. If these groups are the target of the information effort, it would therefore make sense to direct the public relations efforts to these media and to keep the messages simple and easily understood aurally.

195

The second factor to remember is that, if mass and community media are to be used, they should be used effectively. Too often ill-prepared press releases and posters get no results at all. Very specific suggestions for format are made in the checklists that follow. In public relations efforts, format often is almost as important as content in making certain that the audience to which the message is directed learns about the existence and availability of services and activities that might help them better cope with the problems associated with divorce and/or remarriage.

Planning Public Relations Efforts: General Guidelines

The basic strategy underlying successful public relations efforts is to try to make sure your message will attract the attention of your target audience. Listed below are several suggestions to help ensure this.

1. Decide on the audience you are trying to reach. Be as specific as possible in terms of characteristics, such as age, socioeconomic status, and residence.

2. Brainstorm on the profile of the target audience. What are its interests, values, tastes, habits? What do they read? Which newspapers and magazines do they buy? What television programs do they watch? What radio stations do they listen to? Where do they shop for food and clothes? What do they do for entertainment?

3. Based on the profile that is developed, choose the most effective way to reach the audience--through community media (flyers, posters, church bulletins, local newsletters) or mass media (radio, television, newspapers) or both. If the program or service is of interest to the larger community, use the mass media. If only a small group may be interested in the program or service, use community resources, such as churches, store windows, recreation center bulletin board, and shopping centers.

4. After deciding on what media you will use to publicize an event, plan your message. Remember your audience at all times. Appeal to its interests--emphasize key words or issues, like "the dating parent" or "custody rights," that will catch its attention.

5. Remember that eyes are constantly bombarded by all kinds of messages and pictures and that people learn to tune things out. Try to make your message as meaningful and as attractive as possible. Get people's

attention by asking a question; phrasing big, bold messages; and using varied, easy-to-read lettering.

6. If you want to dramatize an issue--for example, the skyrocketing divorce rate and its effect on youth--consider holding a press conference. The press conference, however, has to be a tightly organized and well-planned presentation. Decide beforehand on the specific information to be given out and who is to speak (one or two people only) and stick to these decisions. Do not get sidetracked into other issues that you may not be prepared to handle. A press conference is particularly effective when reacting to media questions. Instead of taking individual telephone calls from different reporters, you can control the situation by bringing the media together in a group and giving your presentation all at once.

7. The most important thing to remember when using the mass media is to retain your credibility. This means not overusing the media--do not call a press conference for trivial matters or send press releases every week. Deal professionally with the media at all times. This requires planning, organization, and good stories.

8. Keep in mind that using the mass media is a two-way street. You want publicity for an event, and the reporters want a good story. You can help each other out. You can also make things easier for yourself by making things easy for the reporter. Present information in press releases and public service announcements in a concise, professional manner.

Preparing a Press Release

The most elementary way of publicizing an event or a program through the mass media (newspapers, television, and radio) is to send a press release. Here is how to do it:

1. Use an official letterhead or type the name of the organization, its address, and telephone number neatly at the top of a sheet of 8 1/2 x 11 plain white paper. Next, note the name of a contact person and his or her phone number. This person will handle all media inquiries. This is how all communications to the media should begin so that editors know immediately upon reading the press release who the sponsoring organization is and whom to call for more information.

2. The first paragraph should include only the most important information--the answers to who, what, when, where, and why.

3. The second and third paragraphs can include additional, less important information.

4. Limit the press release to one page: it should provide a clear, concise, simple summary of the facts. Press releases are sometimes printed almost verbatim. You will get better treatment if the facts are presented succinctly and clearly.

5. Send releases about one week ahead of a projected event. Otherwise, simply note "for immediate release" at the top of the page or give the date when the information can be printed or used.

6. Address the releases to "City Editors" of newspapers and "Assignment Editors" of television and radio stations if you do not have their names.

7. Compile a media mailing list by obtaining relevant addresses and telephone numbers from the telephone book and calling to obtain editors' names.

8. Be sure to note photo possibilities, if any, so that newspaper editors will send photographers with their reporters and television editors can more accurately gauge the appeal of your story.

9. Do not send the press release out unless it has been professionally (that is, neatly) typed, using double spacing with 1-1 1/2 inch margins and no typographical errors or misspelled words.

Calling a Press Conference

Holding a press conference is appropriate and useful if the event or information you wish to publicize falls into one or more of the following categories:

- It is highly unusual and/or visual.
- It has a human interest angle.
- It offers a local angle to a current significant national news story.
- It affects large numbers of people.
- It is a significant development or event in itself.

Some guidelines for holding a press conference are listed below.

1. Make certain that the event is newsworthy and fairly significant. Groups sometimes harm their relations with the mass media by calling a press conference for trivial reasons, when sending a press release would be sufficient.

193

2. If you desire more coverage than a short news story but cannot justify a press conference, consider sending a press release to the feature section (formerly "women's pages") of the newspaper or to the "magazine" portion of the television or radio program. These sections and programs usually have more time and space to devote to longer stories. They also like to focus on interviews with individuals.

3. If you decide to call a press conference, hold an organizational meeting and decide: (a) who will speak and (b) what information you will give out. Limit the number of speakers to one or two persons. Be very specific about what the speakers will talk about and what they will refuse to discuss. Stick to your decisions. Present a united front.

4. Decide on a date. Usually 10 a.m. or earlier on a weekday is good, except the day before and the day of the newspapers' advertising days (usually Wednesdays, when ads take up most of the newspaper and there is little space for news stories).

5. Decide on where you will hold the press conference and possible ways of dramatizing information and, thus, assuring media attention.

6. Mail press releases out at least one week ahead of the conference. Note photo possibilities and alternatives in case of inclement weather if you had planned an outdoor event.

7. Have the assigned contact person (mentioned in the press release) call the day before the conference to remind the City Editor of the newspaper and Assignment Editors of radio and television stations of the conference.

8. On the day of the conference, have information or fact sheets available for reporters with the names and titles of the speakers, necessary background information, and other relevant facts. This saves you tima and eliminates answering trivial questions (e.g., about the spelling of someone's name) over and over again.

9. Circulate a sign-up sheet among the reporters so you will know which stations to watch and which newspapers to read.

10. Start on time and keep the press conference brief--no longer than 30 minutes.

Taking Advantage of Public Service Announcements

Public service announcements or "PSAs" are free plugs on the radio and television for nonprofit groups. This community service is required by the Federal Communications Commission. Each radio and television station usually delegates someone in the program or news department as its "public service director."

1. Call the station manager's office to obtain the name of its public service director. Call this person and make an appointment to see him or her.

2. Before the appointment, familiarize yourself with the station's programming, e.g., whether they have a "community calendar," "phone-in" or local talk show that your group can plug into.

3. Find out what format the station prefers. There is much variation among stations in terms of format. Some stations prefer to write their own copy and to prepare their own video material, such as slides. Other stations expect the group to prepare everything, so that all the announcer has to do is to read the message. Others accept pre-recorded messages.

Stations run 10, 20, 30, and 60-second spots. Twenty-five words equal about 10 seconds.

For television announcements, use visual materials in color, such as 35mm slides, 16mm film, or videotape. There are specific rules for preparing these visuals. Be sure to ask about them. Include four typewritten copies of the message to be read.

In general, keep the announcements short, simple, and conversational. Remember that they are meant to be heard.

4. Submit your message as soon as possible, since stations receive numerous PSAs daily.

5. Sometimes, it is possible to get a local department store or a grocery chain to donate its advertising time to a community group. Contact the store management directly to arrange this.

6. Send a follow-up note to the station. This not only shows your appreciation and maintains good relations with the station, but also is an opportunity to complain, if appropriate. Stations welcome these notes, since their licenses are renewed every three years, and they need to prove to the Federal Communications Commission that they are serving the community.

Communicating Through Flyers and Posters

Effective flyers and posters:
- Attract attention
- Arouse interest
- Convey a message

1. Use only the most important facts. Answer the questions: who or what, when, where, and maybe why. Keep messages simple and clear.

2. Use graphics that add to the verbal message but do not compete with it, contradict it or convey their own message.

3. Leave plenty of white space--wide margins, wide spaces between words and information--for a clean, neat, uncluttered look.

4. Relate the message to the intended audience. Appeal to its particular interests and values.

5. Organize the elements of a message so that the eye moves easily from one element to another. Avoid placing the elements so they compete with one another or distract the reader.

6. The unusual placement of message elements, clever wording, dramatic images--if not overdone--can help call attention to flyers and posters.

7. Emphasize the most important elements of the message with large print, de-emphasize less important elements. Avoid a monotonous look.

8. Stick to short sentences and to short words.

9. Be honest. Don't exaggerate or fudge on facts.

10. Use legible lettering.

Suggestions for Distribution:

Shopping centers (store windows, leafletting)
Churches (with the permission of the pastor) (bulletin boards, leafletting)
Schools
Community Centers
Recreation Centers
Library (with permission) (bulletin boards)
Athletic events

Sending Brochures and Other Mailings

Keep in mind that (1) people have little time to read extraneous material; (2) they have no interest in such materials; and (3) they are suspicious of literature coming into their homes. Several techniques to use to overcome these obstacles include:

1. "Hooking" a person into wanting to read your material by catching his or her attention through attractive graphics or by asking a question.

2. Putting the most important facts first.

3. Using short sentences and large print (this lessens the work for readers, and they may be more inclined, therefore, to read your message).

4. Using lots of white space (wide margins, space between paragraphs). This is easier on the eyes and makes your message more appealing.

5. Being honest. Exaggerated claims turn people off.

6. Establishing a visual identity (your logo or graphic symbol) for future mailings. Readers will recognize your group more easily and will more readily read your material.

7. Holding the reader's interest through an attractive, neat presentation; catchy headings, bordered side, and graphics.

Graphics ideas:

1. Summarize important data in a box
2. Bold headlines
3. Relevant cartoons

Using the "Community Input"
Portion of Radio and Television

Listen to different radio programs and stations and watch local television programs for community input possibilities. Call each station to find out how to get your information on the air. Compile a media resource notebook which consists of the name of the radio or television program, station, number, contact person, address, telephone number, requirements for the message, and any deadlines.

Possibilities:

1. "Voice of the People" shows
2. Talk shows
3. Phone-ins
4. Community interview shows
5. Calling a disc jockey directly to plug the project
6. Community calendars
7. Free speech messages

Considering Other Publicity Avenues

Depending on the target audience, there are numerous other ways to reach people in addition to news stories, posters and newsletters. Here are some suggestions.

Mass Media:

1. Letters to the editor
2. Guest editorials (on radio and television, as well as in newspapers)
3. A guest column or article

Alternative Media:

1. Restaurant placemats
2. Buttons
3. Balloons
4. Bumper stickers
5. Wallet cards
6. Bus billboards
7. Match covers

Public Appearances:

1. Luncheon speaker before civic groups
2. City Council meetings
3. Parents' group meetings
4. Meetings of professional groups
5. Board of Education meetings

SAMPLE 30-SECOND PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Community Resource Center
1030 Arbor Drive
Palo Alto, California 94308
(415) 326-5111

February 3, 1980

Contact: Emily James
(415) 326-1111

30-Second Spot Announcement

Announcer

Do you need help guiding your youngsters through your divorce? Are you unsure about what to tell them and what not to tell them?

Get help at the Community Resource Center workshop for parents this Saturday. Call 326-5111 for information or to register.

Psychologist Selma Martinson will lead the workshop, which will be held at 1030 Arbor Drive, Palo Alto from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The registration fee will be $12.

Call 326-1111 for more information or to register.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

The Community Resource Center February 20, 1980
1030 Arbor Drive
Palo Alto, California 94308
(415) 326-1111

Contact: Emily James
(415) 326-1111

For Immediate Release

Traditional and non-traditional custody and visitation arrangements will be discussed at a seminar for divorcing parents on Monday, March 3, 1980, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., at The Community Resource Center.

Psychologist Beverly Banketts and attorney Lisa Waites will lead the seminar, which will also deal with the use of separation agreements, mediation and litigation to determine custody and visitation arrangements. The seminar will emphasize the importance of cooperative relationships between parents after marital dissolution.

To register or for more information, interested parents should call 326-1111. The seminar will be held at 1030 Arbor Drive in Palo Alto. The registration fee is $10.

APPENDIX 3

DIVORCE AND MOURNING PROJECT

The Marin Community Mental Health Center

Marin County, California

Overview

In 1969, the divorce rate in Marin County was sharply on the rise, and increasing numbers of families were appearing at the Marin Community Mental Health Center with needs stemming from the disruption caused by a marital split. Two women, Joan Kelly and Judy Wallerstein, noticed the similarity between such problems and those they were dealing with in mourning counseling. They decided to develop a model for counseling those suffering from the trauma of divorce, and one of the first programs in the country to help such individuals was underway. The model, based on psychoanalytic theory and crisis intervention concepts, stressed short-term clinical intervention for all members of a divorcing family. This treatment would attempt to prevent serious symptomatology, clarify for all family members what was taking place, emphasize the importance of continued parental contact with children on the part of both parents, and try in particular to identify and help high risk youth.

The program was immediately in demand, and in 1971 a research component was begun to study the divorcing process and the effects of the counseling. Sixty divorcing families, including 131 children, were seen as this part of the effort, and followed up 18 months and 5 years after the separation. Results were very positive, particularly in terms of counselor success in maintaining relationships between fathers and their children. The divorce counseling service continues to be offered through the community mental health program of Marin County, and while the model developed is used more flexibly today, interest in it and the program remain high.

Setting

Marin County, directly north of San Francisco across the Golden Gate Bridge, covers an area of 520 square miles and contains approximately 225,000 residents, most of whom live in small cities and suburbs. Median household income in 1978 was $21,358, among the highest in the nation. Half of Marin's working population commutes to San Francisco, and a large proportion is employed in professional and managerial positions. In

November 1978, unemployment in the county stood at 4.1%, well below the national average. Seven percent of the county's residents in 1978 lived below the official poverty level; 4% were receiving public assistance. Approximately 10% of the county's residents are minorities, primarily Spanish surnamed (6%) and black (3%). Clients in the Marin divorce counseling program, however, tend to be disproportionately low in socioeconomic status. Relative to the rest of the county approximately 25% are on welfare or suffer from low income and education.

The divorce rate in Marin County is four times the California average, which is in turn among the highest in the United States. In recent years divorce and marriage rates in Marin have been approximately equal. Rates of suicide, alcoholism, and drug abuse are also consistently high in the county. Marin boasts an abundance of mental health services, many available through private practices, as well as a wide assortment of human potential and alternative health maintenance groups. There are several organizations of divorced people, frequent classes and workshops offered at local community colleges, and a large subculture of separated and divorced people who lend each other support.

Program Development

The attempt in Marin County to help divorcing individuals, as a defined group, began in 1969 and was among the earliest such efforts in the United States. Joan Kelly, Director of Children's Services for the Marin County Community Mental Health Center at that time, and Judy Wallerstein, Senior Consultant to the Marin County Community Mental Health Center, had been working with those in mourning from the death of a spouse or family member. Increasing numbers of clients were appearing with needs related to divorce, and the similarity between this kind of loss and bereavement led them to the idea of extending their service to those going through divorce. Together they developed a model for providing short term treatment to family members undergoing divorce, and the "Divorce and Mourning Project" was launched. They saw their first client in this treatment program in November 1969. The combination of the rapidly growing divorce rate at that time, the counseling's specific focus on divorce issues, and the publicity accompanying the opening of the program led to its immediate success.

The model developed for this program is based on psychoanalytic theory and crisis intervention concepts. Children are viewed as progressing through a series of developmental stages in psychoanalytic theory, and the family is seen to be an important source of environmental support in this development. The roles of both mother and father are felt to be critical to the child's development. The loss of the family unit and/or either parent are seen to disrupt the needed support system of the child, who may suffer not only at the time of the acute loss, but also as each new developmental stage is reached, if the parent again fails to play his or her vital role in the unfolding developmental process. Crisis intervention theory contributes knowledge about individuals undergoing major life changes and the resultant stress and psychological difficulties which accompany such changes. It was here applied particularly to children and adolescents who must accept and master the departure of one parent as a major and present figure in their young lives.

Five specific assumptions shaped the program, particularly the type and duration of help to be provided:

- That divorce constitutes a time-limited crisis in the life of the child and the adult during which the usual coping and adaptive mechnisms are in disarray.
- That the adult's capacity to parent is diminished at such a time.
- That the child and adolescent might benefit from the opportunity to talk with an objective and psychologically informed adult who might help to clarify feelings, sort out fantasy from reality, and enable the young person to place his responses and his situation within the appropirate perspective.
- That the same would be true for counseling with parents.
- That counseling within a time-limited psychotherapy model represented the treatment of choice.

Five therapists who were already working in the Mental Health Center were trained in use of the divorce counseling model. Meanwhile, Kelly and Wallerstein began an effort of building community awareness concerning the service. Much of this effort was directed at divorce attorneys in the county from whom the majority of referrals eventually came. Contacts were also made with pediatricians, school psychologists, and teachers. The service was described as time-limited, child-focused, and preventive and was at that time offered free of charge.

In 1971, with the help of a grant from the Zellerbach Family Fund of San Francisco, a research component was added to the treatment program which was called the "Children of Divorce Project." Sixty families, including 131 children, participated in this phase of the program. Parents came for an initial period of six weeks of individual counseling for themselves and their children. Typically, mothers were seen five or six times in this period, fathers averaged somewhat fewer visits, depending on their attitude toward the counseling, and children were seen typically two or three times. An average of 14.2 hours was spent with each family. Follow-up contacts were then made 18 months after the separation, and again five years after the separation. It is the information from these follow-up contacts which has provided much of the evidence for the effectiveness of these efforts. The research phase of the project is now completed, but the lessons learned and the model developed continue to have an impact on the ongoing divorce counseling services offered through the Marin Community Mental Health Center.

Goals and Objectives

At the time the divorce counseling program began in Marin, no such services existed. Yet the number of families facing divorce related problems was sizeable and growing. Most of the therapists working in the Mental Health Center tended to use a long-term approach to counseling. The model developed by Wallerstein and Kelly was an attempt to meet the needs of divorcing families through a much shorter term approach. Its essential objectives are:

(1) To provide skilled, clinical intervention to all members of divorcing families.

(2) To make this intervention short-term in nature, consisting of approximately six sessions with separated parents and three or four with each of their children.

(3) To limit the population eligible for this service to those not suffering from long-term debilitating psychological problems.

(4) To make the service as preventative as possible, rather than waiting for serious symptomatology to develop in clients.

(5) To help parents to adjust to the divorce, maintaining their ability to perform as competent adults, while continuing to parent effectively, and to help both the custody and noncustody parent to maintain or develop a close relationship to their children in the new circumstances.

(6) To help children to clarify what is happening to their family, to put in proper perspective their role in the breakup, and to suggest constructive avenues for them to adjust to the new circumstances.

(7) To build awareness in the community concerning the normative nature of divorce-related problems, and the availability of the counseling services offered by the Mental Health Center.

Nature of Services

All Marin County residents are eligible for services offered through the Community Mental Health Center. The one restriction is that individuals affected by long term psychological problems not stemming from a divorce be restricted from the divorce counseling. Thus the question is not one of eligibility, but of what type of service is most appropriate, and this is generally a clinical decision made by the assigned therapist. Those who typically will not be given the divorce counseling are youth who have ongoing problems without particular reference to their parents' divorce, adults or youth who have serious, psychotic problems, and those who in general require long term treatment. The one qualification that must be met once divorce counseling is decided upon as the appropriate type of help is that the couple have already separated and filed for divorce.

The number of youth seen with presenting problems stemming directly from a divorce is currently running at about 10% of the caseload of youth in the county under 18 years of age. The number of adults seeking help who have divorce-related problems is higher than this; most counselors report that the majority of their clients are either divorcing or single parents. It is, however, often difficult to define the exact cause of a client's problem. There is usually a complex web of contributing factors. The current Director of Children's Services estimates that approximately 22 families, with 60 individuals, were seen in the latest completed fiscal year (1977-1978) for problems primarily stemming from divorces.

Intake procedures for each new client vary somewhat with different therapists but have in common an attempt to learn the history of the divorce.

Thus the first session or two are usually devoted to asking the client a series of questions designed to establish this history. These inquiries concern: (a) how the couple met and the history of the courtship; (b) when problems began to develop in the marriage and their nature; (c) when the separation occurred, who initiated it, what the children were told, and how they reacted; and (d) an individual history of each of the children, including medical, developmental, school adjustment, peer relations histories, and current parental concerns about the children, as well as their self-concerns. All this is used to establish a baseline for observation and to help define the best approach for dealing with the problems. Notes are then taken in each subsequent session reporting on therapeutic efforts and progress. All such information is strictly confidential.

Direct Services

The primary service provided in this program is that of counseling for the family members affected by a divorce. The emphasis is on short-term crisis intervention and clarification. This is almost always through individual counseling, provided by a psychologist or social worker. These counselors tend in general to have a psychodynamic approach to counseling, although most are eclectic and flexible. They see family members individually for the most part and occasionally in pairs or groups once the counseling is in progress. The mother is most likely to seek help, and typically the first session is conducted with her before other family members are seen. The counselor then attempts to bring the father in, which is usually successful, partly because the needs of the children are emphasized with him. Children are then seen individually as well. The length of treatment varies from family to family, although most staff feel the model devised by Wallerstein and Kelly is very brief, and that it takes more than six weeks to work out many of the problems clients present. Thus, families are more often seen for three months or longer, rather than the six weeks suggested by the model.

There are many symptoms which divorcing parents and their offspring bring to the counseling sessions. They include withdrawal, regression, minor delinquencies, suspiciousness, temporary impairment of reality testing, and depression. The history-taking process, described earlier, provides information useful in identifying these and reaching tentative diagnoses.

For adults, this diagnostic formulation generally includes three components: (a) the central psychological impact of the divorce; (b) the usual and customary functioning of the individual; and (c) the motivation and capacities of the adult to parent effectively under the new circumstances. For the children and adolescents, the counselors attempt to assess: (a) the developmental achievement of the youth; (b) his or her response to the divorce; and (c) what support network is available for the future. In counseling children and adolescents, counselors generally focus on the following issues:

- the child's cognitive understanding of his or her parent's divorce;
- the child's affective responses to the divorce;
- whether the child's usual defenses are adequate or whether other defensive or coping strategies are developing;
- the pervasiveness of the child's responses to the divorce; and
- the existence of new symptoms in response to the divorce.

In addition, counselors explore the nature and extent of support systems for the child, including the current parent-child relationships as seen through the child's eyes, relationships with siblings, relationships with grandparents and other extended family members, support available from school and teachers, and peer support. Much of the counseling then seeks to clarify for the child what is happening in the divorce, to facilitate the strengthening of the child's coping mechanisms, and to strengthen the child's relationship with both the custodial and non-custodial parent, particularly the latter.

Certain other characteristics of the program derive from the nature of the counseling provided. For example, the program views itself as an advocate for children and adolescents. Thus it tends to structure both parent and child counseling in a way that is constructive for youth. Parents undergoing the stress of divorce often are poor observers of their children and miss indicators of problems they would normally notice. Likewise, children may react to the divorce with withdrawal and denial. One service the counselors provide is to give feedback to the parents on how the children are doing, a matter of great concern to most divorcing parents. The program also takes an educational stance with children, and counselors try to explain not only what is happening in the divorce but what alternatives the child has for reacting and what actions he or she can take to cope in the new circumstances. In addition, counselors comment that their approach in the divorce counseling is often more directive than in other situations, partly to accommodate the short-term time frame of the counseling and partly because they are interested in certain clear outcomes, such as the father's continued involvement with the children. All of these features are important aspects of the counseling.

Interventions used in the counseling are described by Wallerstein and Kelly as being of three types: child-centered, child-parent relationship centered, and adult-centered. Interventions also range along a continuum from educational to psychotherapeutic. Educational approaches are used primarily with children, with increasing use made of the psychotherapeutic approaches in the child-parent relationship counseling and in the adult centered interventions. Variations occur from case to case. These generalizations are not hard and fast rules.

The child-centered interventions are aimed at providing an explanation to children (through encouragements to parents) of the decision to divorce. Most parents provide no explanation at all to young children out of shame, guilt, or embarrassment, thus leaving the child with no assurance of continued contact and support. Encouragement is also given to the non-custodial parent to maintain a continuing relationship with the child, and practical suggestions are provided to accomplish this. Counselors also draw upon their knowledge of age-appropriate responses to suggest specific approaches to parents, helping them to understand their children's anger and the fact that reactions they are observing in their children are not unique or unusual.

The child-parent relationship interventions are used with those parents whose weakness is not primarily in knowledge but in their capacity to respond effectively. This involves an explanation of the underlying dynamics of the child's behavior to the parent, interpretations of the parent's internal conflicts and difficulty in performing proper parenting functions, and support for the parents' efforts to regain parenting capacity to control their children's destructive reactions to the divorce. Attempts are made, particularly in working with fathers, to disengage the relationship with the children from the marital struggle and to validate the father's continuing importance to the children.

The adult-centered interventions, which respond to the parent's needs beyond the parent-child relationship, is largely directed towards facilitating the transition to the single-parent role. Many women come from a marriage in which they have been very dependent upon their husband, and the freedom and responsibility of single life are a new, troubling experience. Help in coping with this experience and in organizing a life around the new circumstances is a central part of this aspect of the counseling.

Children seem to want counseling in varying amounts depending on their age and sex. Children who are eight or younger, particularly preschool children, are generally seen only once or twice. They are often less aware, at least consciously, of the changes taking place and have less to talk about. Children from 9 to 12 are ususally seen three or four times and seem generally to want more contact with the counselor. Youth 13 and over are more hesitant to come in for counseling generally. They seem particularly sensitive to the stigma that may be attached to needing "mental" health treatment. In general girls seem more willing to talk about their divorce-related problems than boys, and this is especially true of adolescents. One attempt was made to begin an adolescent group counseling program, but difficulties in working out schedules resulted in the termination of the effort. As with the overall length of treatment with parents, adherence to the original model has been loosened with reference to children, who are often seen less than the three or four times suggested by the model.

The counseling is focused particularly on children seen to be at risk. This includes various categories of children. The child who feels strongly responsible for the divorce and feels he or she has to get the family back together is one high risk type. Another is the child/youth who strongly reminds a parent of the other spouse, and who may therefore be the target of special abuse or special yearning. Another high risk type is the child caught in a custody fight, when he or she may become the pawn of one or both parents in the power struggle taking place. Counselors work particularly with children in such categories to clarify what is occurring, to emphasize the youth's lack of responsibility for what is happening, and to provide support and guidance to the child in adjusting to the new situation. Almost all children want a parental reconciliation, and much of the counseling is usually directed towards helping the child to accept the divorce and structure his or her life accordingly.

Certain problems and themes related to divorce tended to recur in discussions with those working in the Marin Program. Some of these deserve mention. One prominent theme was the importance of involving fathers fully in the counseling and of helping them to maintain, or, if necessary, build closer relationships with their children after the separation. Father contact with children is one of the important criteria for success used by the program. Fathers, who typically do not take custody of the children, often find their visitation time with their children at first very awkward, as they are solely responsible for structuring the time and interacting with the children. They often have to learn how to do this effectively and how to avoid the "Santa Claus trap" of always bringing presents. Counselors in the program view it as vitally important that fathers maintain their parenting roles and that children continue to have two parents, even though they are apart.

Another issue that was discussed frequently by staff in the program is that of dating and remarriage on the part of the divorcing parents. This is typically difficult for both parents and children. Parents have to adjust to the difficulties of trying to meet other single people, while carrying on all the usual adult and parenting responsibilities of their lives. Offspring may have trouble viewing their parents in such roles, particularly when new boyfriends or girlfriends begin appearing in the house or staying overnight. Where there are adolescent girls in the family, competition may develop between mother and daughter. When babysitting tasks are shifted onto older offspring to allow the custodial parent to spend time with a new potential mate, resentments are often caused. Additionally, there are frequently difficulties with acceptance between the child and potential new stepparent, particularly when children feel this new relationship threatens their relationship with the noncustody natural parent.

Another common problem discussed by staff in the Marin Program was the financial difficulties faced by divorcing families. Two households must be established where there had been one, and customary luxuries may have to be restricted. Adolescents in particular often worry about their financial needs, such as money for college or dating. Mothers usually have to work, which creates a difficult transition if they had not been and means less parent-child contact. Single-parent families are highly associated with low-income problems, and this appears to be true even in Marin County.

Several counselors also discussed the difficulties adolescents face in their own development when their parents divorce. First, their image of their parents is ususally damaged. Whereas before the parents might have been seen in an unrealistically positive light as powerful and wise, suddenly they are likely to be seen as just the opposite. The necessity of adjusting to a shattered idol is a difficulty many adolescents face. The loss of respect may also make the provision of adequate discipline difficult for the parents, especially for the custody parent. Another frequent problem is related to the need for independence which is characteristic of adolescence. Attempting to establish their independence, adolescents may simply deny the impact of the divorce in their lives and move more quickly from their base in the family to establishing their own life support system. This can cause difficulties if they are not yet emotionally ready for the change, although most counselors view this as a relatively constructive way for them deal with the divorce.

Another issue involves conflicts associated with the leaver and the one left. When divorcing couples come in for the counseling they often say that the decision to divorce is mutual. In fact, counselors find that this is rarely the case. Usually there is a leaver, who suffers from guilt, and one who is left, who suffers from feelings of abandonment. The one who is left frequently views the children as being more damaged by the divorce than does the one who initiates the separation, although both see the children as undergoing some harm.

One final issue frequently discussed by staff in the program is the difficulty of knowing the best time to begin divorce counseling. It was suggested that therapists can sometimes inadvertently encourage divorce, since they tend to identify with their client and his or her description of the marital situation. Therapists are also likely to see divorce as less than a horrible alternative. Therefore, care must be taken to assure that the divorce decision is certain and that marriage and/or family counseling is not more appropriate. This is the reason that the divorce counseling is restricted to those who have already separated and filed for divorce. Occasionally, a marriage will have gone through a period of great stress, because of the loss of a child or a severe financial setback, and the couple will have "decided" on a divorce, when what is really needed is marriage counseling to clarify the situation and allow the restoration of stability in the marriage. At the same time, therapists generally feel that when a divorce is appropriate, the earlier in the separation process they can see families, the more symptomatology and pain they can prevent or alleviate. It thus requires the treading of a fine line to assure that the divorce counseling comes as early as possible but not before the decision to divorce is firm.

Indirect Services

The Marin County Community Mental Health Services offers a variety of programs to serve residents of the county, many of which are related in one way or another to the divorce counseling program. These include:

- Crisis Services. This involves a 24-hour crisis intervention service, and a jail team which works in cooperation with the law enforcement services.

- Transitional Services. This program serves the chronically mentally disordered population of the county.

- Developmental Disabilities. This program is designed for the mentally retarded, neurologically handicapped, and autistic residents of the county.

- Drug Abuse Services. This unit provides services to those with drug abuse-related problems. A parallel program exists for those suffering from alcohol problems.

In addition to the services provided directly by the Community Mental Health Services, many services are provided through contracts with other community agencies and individuals. Typically contracts are with hospitals, residential treatment centers, vocational rehabilitation programs, law enforcement programs, and a variety of informational services. Thus, referrals can be made to a wide range of programs and services in the county, which are useful both in bringing clients who need the divorce counseling to the program and in providing needed supplemental services to those undergoing the divorce counseling.

Community Awareness and Participation

The Marin Community Mental Health Center has an advisory board made up of 15 members, five each of whom are professionals in the field, community representatives, and consumers of the services. Membership on the board is for a three-year term, although typically turnover is more frequent than this. The board meets once each month. Its mission is to oversee the mental health of the county and make recommendations to the county board of supervisors. It is also charged with approving a yearly mental health plan for the county. Eight task forces are appointed for this effort each year, made up largely of mental health staff members, but with one advisory board member on each. Each task force has six two-hour meetings, and their respective efforts are then assembled into the yearly plan. Two of the board's current thrusts are to extend better services to the minority residents of the county and to the elderly residents, both of whom are currently underrepresented among the Center's clients.

There are many other community activities related to the Community Mental Health Center's efforts. The Mental Health Association, a nationally based volunteer organization of nonprofessionals in the field who are attempting to promote mental health services, is active in the county. There is a network of approximately 20 private contracting agencies, including several hospitals, which bids on various county-or state-funded efforts requiring mental health services. There are several organized divorce groups active in the county, including Parents Without Partners and the Unitarian Singles Group. There are also several organizations targeted at specific problems adolescents often have related to divorce such as drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and petty crime. The referral system between the Community Mental Health Center, the schools, the judicial system, and these various organizations appears to be generally good.

Outreach efforts are continuing to be made in the county. Levels of effort in this regard tend to go in cycles. In 1974 outreach was pursued vigorously, while less was done in 1976-1977. The current part-time Coordinator of the Divorce and Mourning Project is now pursuing such efforts more vigorously and gives weekly talks to interested groups, including classes at local high schools and community colleges, groups of teachers, parent groups, and day care center workers. In these presentations she tries to convey the message that the service is counseling, not therapy, and to sensitize the population to mental health concerns. She finds that continual outreach is necessary, since the population of those going through divorce is an ever changing one. Consultative contacts with others who work with divorce-related problems are also frequent, including school psychologists and teachers, pediatricians, and counselors working in areas of the county with particularly high divorce rates. Referrals to the program from such individuals continue to be made as well as from divorce attorneys in the county. Outreach is regarded as vital, not only to maintain the flow of clients in the program and public support for the program, but also to encourage potential clients to come in for help before serious symptomatology develops. Approximately half of the coordinator's time is therefore spent on outreach.

Administration of Program

Staffing

At the time the divorce counseling began, five therapists already working in the Center were trained in the use of the Wallerstein and Kelly model. As word of the service spread and the research element was added, the staff grew to about 20 in the early seventies. Currently, eight staff serve as therapists for divorce-related problems in Marin, four in Mill Valley in the southern part of the county, two in Novato to the north, and one each in East San Rafael to the east and West Marin in the west. The last three of these sites are "satellite clinics." These staff members are not exclusively divorce counselors. Most have a background in child development and therapy. Two are psychologists while the remainder are social workers. Many work part-time in the Center and have private practices on their own. One counselor, who works in the Mill Valley Center, serves as the current part-time Coordinator of the Divorce and Mourning Project. She is responsible to the county Director of the Children's Division. In each of the satellite clinics, therapists are responsible to their unit directors.

When the divorce counseling program was beginning, regular monthly in-service meetings of all staff were held in which Dr. Wallerstein would discuss the model and the individual cases to which it was being applied. As continuing Senior Consultant to the Center, she provides monthly in-service meetings, although they are now often focused on non-divorce cases. Sessions generally involve discussion of diagnoses and approaches to treatment of difficult cases. Occasionally a session will involve an update on the analysis of the followup data collected on those involved in the divorce counseling research.

219

Facilities

The main office of the Marin Community Mental Health Center is located in Mill Valley in a modern, two story, cedar-shingled building near the downtown area. It consists of a complex of offices and meeting rooms, with a reception room and main secretarial area in one part. The satellite clinics are smaller, similarly structured sites in which a few rooms are generally rented. The administrative personnel for the Center are housed in the county hospital located a few miles to the north of Mill Valley in San Anselmo.

Costs

The costs of the divorce counseling service per se are difficult to estimate, as the service is part of the Center's overall program of services. They basically include the therapist's time plus overhead. Until 1974 the service was free to clients. Since then a sliding scale fee has been imposed based on the client's ability to pay. This causes a number of problems. Inasmuch as money is usually a problem at the time of divorce, either because of simple shortages or because of conflicts between divorcing partners, therapists believe this has both tended to decrease the number of clients seeking help and has caused those who do come in to wait until symptomatology is more likely to have developed. Husbands are usually assessed a larger fee than wives, since they usually earn more income. Since they are usually more resistant to the counseling at the beginning, the fee system tends to increase this resistance and/or cause resentment if they do undergo the counseling. Sometimes husbands are seen as "collateral" clients, who avoid the fee and resultant problems.

The likelihood of eliminating the fee system is low, nevertheless, partly due to the general funding problems of social service agencies in the wake of Proposition 13 and partly because it is particularly difficult to convince funding authorities of the importance of what is viewed as preventive service given the prevalence of existing problems. Likewise, medical insurance programs will not generally cover the costs of a "preventive" treatment. This results in reinforcement of the importance of the outreach and community awareness aspects of the program as well as the value of the program and its preventive approach to both funding authorities and potential clients.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation of the community mental health services consists largely of hand counts of the number and types of clients seen in the various clinics. Each counselor prepares an intake form which describes each client's presenting problem; the type of treatment which ensues is also recorded. Clients are categorized by age. Totals seen by all staff in each age and problem category are computed annually by the central administrative staff. A yearly report is prepared and submitted to the state which summarizes this information. The Center's three-year plan includes a design for client satisfaction surveys in certain of the service areas in the future, but little of this has been done to date. Budgetary restrictions make it unlikely that very much will be done in the near future.

Evaluation of the Divorced and Mourning Project has been more extensive because of the research nature of the effort. One criterion Kelly and Wallerstein believe is an important indication of the success of the counseling is the rate of continuing interest which fathers are showing in their children after divorce. Eighty-five percent were still paying child support payments 18 months after the separation, and a high percentage were maintaining regular visitations, more than at the time of the first counseling session. Most had continued to live within an hour of their children so that such visitation would be possible. Since the program focused on fathers building relationships with their children after the divorce, this is regarded as heartening. Verbal feedback on the program in general has been very positive from mothers and children as well as fathers. Fifty-eight of sixty families returned for the first follow-up data collection 18 months after separation, and 56 of the 60 did so after 5 years. Those families involved tended to view the sessions as a safe place to come and work out feelings, which was outside the legal adversarial process which occur during the divorce. The focus of maintaining adult competence and parenting were especially well regarded. Kelly and Wallterstein have been pleasantly surprised by the degree of positive feedback, which suggests success beyond their expectations.

Several publications have reported on the program. Wallerstein and Kelly discuss the counseling service in general in an article "Divorce Counseling: A Community Service for Families in the Midst of Divorce," which appeared in the January 1977 issue of the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. They report more specifically on what was learned about adolescents who are members of divorcing families in an article entitled "The effects of parental divorce: the adolescent experience."[1] They are also working on a book which will discuss their five-year follow-up data and the nature of post-divorce relationships. This is scheduled to appear in late 1979.

Replication

Kelly reports that a great deal of interest has been shown in the model developed in the Marin Program, and Wallerstein and Kelly have discussed it and provided training in its use at numerous conferences and workshops. Many who are interested have come to Marin County for a two-day training session that has been developed to make it available to others. At least one program is using a slight variation of the model for treatment of children who are the object of a custody dispute. This program is located in the San Francisco Children's Hospital and operates as part of the San Francisco Community Mental Health Services. It treats children 5 to 7 years of age and serves a population which is disproportionately minority. It is being carefully evaluated and may provide more information on the effectiveness of the Wallerstein and Kelly model.

Currently, the Marin program has produced no media materials which would be useful in replicating the program beyond the publications previously identified. The greatest cost of the program is that of the therapists time. Dr. Kelly suggests that the 14.2 hours of time devoted to the average family in treatment can be used to estimate this cost for a new program There are also the usual overhead costs, the expense of training therapists in use of the model, and the costs of building community awareness.

Wallerstein and Kelly believe the most important qualification for a therapist to effectively use their model is generally a solid therapeutic training and a familiarity with developmental psychology. Great skill is also required to counsel effectively with youth. In particular caution must be exercised to avoid use of clinical terminology, which may frighten away young people because of the stigma attached to psychological difficulties.

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[1] Wallerstein, J., & Kelley, J. The effects of parental divorce: The adolescent experience. In J. Anthony & C Koupernik (Eds.), The Child in his family: Children at psychiatric risk. New York: Wiley & Sons, 1974.

They also believe that it is important to provide opportunities for staff to support each other informally and to deal collectively with the stresses that often stem from this kind of work.

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APPENDIX 4

CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN FAMILY CRISIS
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Overview

The Center for Children in Family Crisis (CCFC) offers a program that is child-centered and preventive in nature, in support of the assumption that emotional difficulties in children of divorce are easier to prevent than to resolve. The goal is to provide specific information about the effects of the divorce process to separating or divorcing parents with dependents. The objectives of the program focus on issues such as how to interpret family dissolution to the children, visitation and post-separation arrangements, and ways of easing the crisis for the children. Skills to deal with these issues are taught in individual and group training sessions for both custodial and noncustodial parents. The children may also be involved in either group or individual sessions. The Center has developed and copyrighted several guidelines for working with various individuals affected by divorce. CCFC also offers consultation about divorce to agencies and organizations and educational workshops to the public and professionals who have contact with divorcing families. Evaluation is an important component of CCFC's program. A two-year study, designed to learn what parents are doing with the information they receive and to measure how successfully CCFC has intervened with families to ease the effects of the divorce on their children has recently been completed.

Setting

Pittsburgh, one of Pennsylvania's major cities, is located in the southwest part of the State in Allegheny County, where it covers an area of 55.5 square miles. The services of the Center for Children in Family Crisis extend to all of Allegheny County, hence the population utilizing the Center is suburban and rural, as well as urban. Allegheny County covers an area of 728 square miles and has a population of 1.5 million. Roughly one third of these people inhabit the city of Pittsburgh.

Per capita income of Allegheny County residents was $6,540 in 1978. In this area, so well known for mining and industry, operatives and craft workers constitute the occupational majority. About seven percent of

Allegheny County's residents receive public assistance in some form. Almost nine percent of the County's inhabitants are unemployed.

Minorities make up approximately 10% of the population, with blacks comprising over 97% of the total minority population.

The divorce rate in Allegheny County, at 3.4%, is slightly higher than that for the entire State of Pennsylvania (3.1%). In 1976, Allegheny County's marriage rate, at 7.5%, was slightly more than two times the divorce rate for that same year.

Program Development

Planning for CCFC began in the early 1970s when an increasing local divorce rate led staff at the South Hills Child Guidance Center to perceive a need for a preventive mental health service for families and children experiencing separation and divorce. The staff responsible for direct treatment to children at the Center had observed a marked increase in the number of youngsters experiencing severe emotional and behavioral problems associated with parental divorce. At the same time, staff members in the Consultation and Education Unit working in the public schools noted school problems among children whose families had recently experienced a divorce. The impact of the high divorce rates was also felt by lawyers in the County, who were increasingly being asked to provide legal services to divorcing families. Furthermore, clinical and research literature was emerging that identified children of divorce as a significant "population at risk." After several meetings to discuss these concerns, the staff decided to develop a service to meet the needs of children affected by the skyrocketing divorce rate.

The staff believed that the first steps should be to promote public awareness of the problem, to explore the social, psychological and legal issues relevant to divorce, and to foster collaborative relations with the legal community. To this end, the South Hills Child Guidance Center and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, in conjunction with the Allegheny Bar Association and other mental health agencies, sponsored a symposium on divorce early in 1974. The interest, enthusiasm and concern sparked by this multidisciplinary undertaking led to the development of the countywide outreach program by the South Hills Child Guidance Center.

The Center for Children and Families in Crisis was officially established in 1975 with funding from the South Hills Child Guidance Center and private foundations. The program was placed administratively under the Center's Consultation and Education (C and E) Unit because many of the unit's staff were instrumental in developing the program and, more importantly, because the C and E unit shared the program's emphasis on prevention and education. The initial staff consisted of the director (a psychiatric nurse), a mental health worker, and a secretary. We were told by the CCFC staff that the original director brought to the program considerable experience in consultation and education and in direct treatment with adults and children. We were also told that her extensive knowledge of and experience in the local community was an important element in getting the program accepted by mental health workers and others in the community who were important sources of referrals and support. The Center is now a countywide Center funded by the Allegheny County Mental Health Association.

Aside from securing financial support for the program, a major problem during its initial stages was the fact that direct preventive services seemed to be an alien concept to many mental health professionals, who were accustomed to dealing with individuals only after they had already exhibited identifiable symptoms of mental disorder. An example of this confusion was the referral of severely disturbed individuals to the program simply because they had at some point in their life experienced a divorce. In general, the problem was one of explaining the program to persons in the mental health system so they understood that individuals with long-standing mental health problems were not the focus of the new service. A related problem was the effort by the director to attempt to avoid labeling the clients as suffering from some kind of psychiatric condition. In keeping with the preventive concept, the program was focused on nonclinical divorcing populations who were not necessarily showing symptoms of the stress associated with the divorcing process.

To counteract these prevailing misconceptions of the program's purposes, the director initiated an extensive public relations/education campaign directed at both mental health professionals and the general public. With mental health professionals, she was concerned with defining the appropriate target population of the program. She stressed that the program was a preventive one aimed at the general divorcing population and the children involved, rather than a treatment one directed at individuals with long standing psychiatric disorders. As such, the program should be seen as complementing the efforts of other mental health professionals rather than as competing with them. For the general public, the director made a large number of presentations on television and radio and to groups of parents and educators. She tried to convey the message that the program was directed toward all families undergoing the crisis of divorce that divorce posed special risks for the children involved, and that the program was educational in nature and, as such, differed from psychotherapy or other mental health approaches. In this way, she tried to avoid the negative labeling and stigmatization often associated with seeking help from mental health agencies. In short, her approach was to avoid making "patients" out of divorcing individuals and to consider them as ordinary individuals dealing with a stressful transition in their lives.

Program Objectives

The primary goal of CCFC is to help children cope effectively with the separation and divorce of their parents, thereby forestalling the development of social and emotional problems frequently associated with divorce. This goal is achieved through individual and group consultations with custodial and noncustodial parents in order to enhance their skills as parents. Short-term crisis intervention is also provided directly to children with special needs. The secondary goal of the service is to sensitize human service professionals and the general public to the needs of children and families undergoing separation and divorce. The CCFC staff believe that lawyers and judges, in particular, should be sensitized to these needs because they often have considerable influence with divorcing families through their involvement with issues around visitation and custody. Teachers and medical doctors can also benefit from an understanding of the psychological issues associated with divorce because they frequently come into contact with divorcing families and their children.

In keeping with its preventive orientation, the service is based on the view that effective management of crises by children builds strengths and adaptive resources, while nonadaptive solutions predispose the child to enduring maladjustments. Crises such as divorce are viewed as time-limited, with great potential for producing rapid, significant changes in the individual's coping styles with important future consequences. Accordingly, prevention is preferred over reconstructive efforts. The ultimate aim of the program is to structure the divorce process for children so as to produce crisis-resistant individuals or, at least, individuals with well-developed crisis mastery skills. Such individuals are those who have been able to fully experience the grief and the sense of loss associated with divorce.

Although child-focused and primarily preventive in nature, the intervention is primarily directed to parents in their role as caretakers of their children. The assumption is that while divorce ends a marriage, parenthood is forever. This view holds that a divorce decree cannot and does not end parental responsibilities, that problems do not stop when the divorce decree is final, and that families often need help to focus their feelings and decisions so that they can continue to exercise their joint responsibilities to their children in a constructive way. Both parents, therefore, are encouraged to recognize that they are equally important to the child and that a healthy post-divorce relationship with the child can be established if both parents agree to work together as parents for the best interest of the child. The child's continued relationship with both parents is viewed as constituting the optimal situation for the child's emotional growth and development.

The relationship between the parents is de-emphasized except when it directly involves communication about the welfare of the children. This approach is based on the belief that the spouses can separate their marital relationship from their relationship as parents, especially when the family is in the process of divorce. By focusing on their children's needs and on parenting issues as distinct from marital issues, CCFC helps parents to resolve custody/visitation disputes and other divorce-related issues. The resolution of these issues, in turn, often leads to increased feelings of confidence and self-esteem on the part of the parents, thus indirectly helping them to deal with their own problems in coping with the divorce process.

As a program directed primarily towards training parents, and, secondarily, toward working with children of divorce, the CCFC approach is based on the view that training parents in specific parenting skills is the most effective method for reducing problems with their children and building the confidence and self-esteem of parents. The underlying assumption is that the source of psychiatric difficulties for children of divorce is not the divorce per se but rather the family turmoil leading up to the divorce and parental misguidance during the divorce process. The individual and group educational sessions are devoted to enhancing general parenting skills, exploring common problems and needs of children of divorce, and helping parents resolve specific divorce-related issues such as how to tell the child about the dissolution of the marriage and how to resolve custody and visitation problems. The staff at CCFC function as supportive teachers, helping clients to identify deficits in their parenting skills and to learn new parenting skills so they can become more self-confident and effective as parents. In their role as teachers, the staff workers are able to be directive as well as supportive with clients experiencing difficulty with their children. The staff have learned from their experience that the emotional support received and the new skills learned by the clients enable them to overcome the sense of inadequacy that often follows a divorce.

In keeping with its major focus on enhancing the skills of divorcing parents, CCFC has formulated specific objectives related primarily to working with parents and, secondarily, to working with some children from divorcing families. (All children are invited to participate in the children's groups). Objectives regarding parent skills are further divided into those involving parents' interacting with their children (parent-child skills) and those that involve parents interacting with each other around children's issues (parent-parent skills). The objectives in each of these categories are as follows:

Parent-Child Skills

1. To help parents provide critical child-relevant information to the child about the separation/divorce;
2. To teach parents how to listen and respond effectively to the child's needs, feelings, and concerns following the divorce decision; and,
3. To assist parents in sharing with their children their feelings about and reactions to the separation or divorce.

Parent-Parent Skills

1. To assist parents in establishing and in implementing a concrete, realistic visitation plan that takes into account the needs of the child;
2. To encourage parents to work collaboratively with the ex-spouse in designing visitation arrangements; and,
3. To help parents communicate with each other about general child-related issues.

Children's Skills

1. To help children recognize and deal with their emotional reactions to the divorce.
2. To assist children in achieving a realistic understanding and perception of divorce; and,
3. To help them adjust to their current circumstances instead of longing for an unattainable past.

NATURE OF SERVICES

Direct Services

CCFC provides direct preventive services to individuals, families, and groups. The aim is not only to give divorcing parents information and understanding about their children's needs, but also to help them utilize this information in managing their children's crises. Most clients are seen individually for four to eight sessions. They may then join a group for custodial parents or one for noncustodial parents, if such groups are available at the time. Since these groups are offered only three times a year, most of the work with the clients is conducted in individual sessions. Although the focus of the intervention is on training parents, children are occasionally seen individually or, more often, in groups if the need arises. Groups for children are offered three times a year and are formed around two or three year age-clusters. Approximately 50% of the children who come to the service attend such groups.

Clients usually initiate contact with the Center by calling for information and scheduling an appointment if they think the services are appropriate for them. During the initial telephone conversation, the intake worker gathers a minimal amount of information regarding the demographic characteristics of the client, the referral source, the status of the marriage, the number of children involved, and the presenting problem (which usually concerns the child's reactions to the divorce).

Having collected this information, the worker then schedules the client for an appointment in about two or three weeks. A questionnaire designed to gather more detailed information about the children and the parent-child relationship(s) is then mailed to the client, who is expected to fill it out and return it at the initial interview. Since the questionnaire is the major instrument used in evaluating the service, clients also complete it after termination of the services. Equally important, the questionnaire also helps the worker to focus the educational sessions by helping to identify some problem areas that the client may need to work on. Information collected through the questionnaire allows the clients and the worker to focus on specific goals during the individual and group sessions.

Through the questionnaire, information is elicited in the following areas: what the child was told about the divorce, the child's reactions to the divorce, changes in the child's behavior as a result of the divorce, the parent's reactions to these changes, and whether the parent has shared his/her own feelings about the divorce with the child. Information is also elicited regarding the nature of the visitation plans, any problems involved in establishing these plans, and communication between parents around other child-related issues.

During the initial interview, the questionnaire is reviewed by the worker and the client to identify problems in the three goal areas previously mentioned that may be the focus of discussion in the later sessions. The interviewer attempts to identify problems that the client views as important and may therefore be willing to set goals for as well as problems that the interviewer deems important but may not be viewed as such by the client. Some information is also collected at this time regarding the history of the marriage and the nature of the marital discord. The major focus of the interview, however, is on the general functioning of the child and the parent-child relationship. This information is useful to the worker in gaining an understanding of the family and in identifying strengths or weaknesses that may affect the parents' ability to accomplish their goals.

During the initial interview, the child (or children) is occasionally interviewed separately by a CCFC worker when the child is showing symptoms as a resulting from a longstanding family problem. For the most part, children are interviewed individually to determine whether they should be referred to another agency for more intensive treatment. Before bringing the child to the Center, the custodial parent is told how to prepare the child for the visit. The parents are advised to tell the child in age-appropriate terms the purpose of the Center and why he or she is coming. Parents are encouraged to convey to the child that the problem is not his or hers alone but rather that coming to the Center is a recognition that he or she too has concerns and feelings about the divorce. The message should be that both the parent and the child can benefit from the Center's services. In this way, parents can give the child permission to share his or her concerns and feelings with the counselors.

Groups for Parents. Direct services to parents are short-term and educational in nature. Both individual and group sessions are devoted to helping parents solve problems and make decisions regarding divorce-related crises with their children. Issues commonly explored include the following: how to tell the children about the divorce; the importance of allowing children to carry on a productive relationship with both parents; how to avoid involving children in the parental conflicts; how to establish a realistic and satisfactory visitation plan; how to help the child deal with his/her grief and sense of loss; how to separate one's feelings of failure as a marriage partner from one's sense of confidence as a parent; how to establish security and stability for the children without encouraging overdependency; and how to understand children's typical reactions to the divorce process.

With the help of their worker, clients are encouraged to identify certain parenting issues on which to work. Thus, the goals for the client are specific and concrete. In achieving these goals, a variety of educational interventions are used, including the assignment of relevant reading materials about divorce and child development, discussions of divorce-relevant issues, the practice of new skills and approaches with children and the ex-spouse, and training in general communication skills.

As mentioned earlier, separate educational groups are provided for custodial and noncustodial parents. These groups are usually held every other week in order to give parents the opportunity to integrate what they have learned and to practice their new skills. Basic guidelines for the parent groups and for the children's groups are available from the Center.

As in the individual sessions, the group intervention encourages parents to identify one or more areas of parental competency to work on. This identification of goals helps the member to rapidly focus their efforts and to emphasize child-related issues. Although this approach is generally quite successful, problems occasionally arise when some members choose goals different from those of the rest of the group and consequently find it hard to sustain interest in the group.

Staff members believe that the group modality is particularly effective for adults experiencing separation and divorce. The group tends to lessen the feelings of isolation experienced by these adults. Since members are at different stages in the divorce process, more advanced members are able to serve as role models for persons in the early stages of divorce. Additionally, those members who are simply more effective in managing their children can serve as role models for those who are less effective. Finally, members are able to receive support as well as give it, and this seems to enhance the effectiveness of the group.

Both the custodial and the noncustodial parents groups follow a similar format. The group sessions for parents are described briefly below:

1st session

The purpose of this session is to create group cohesion and to begin the process of goal-setting. Members introduces themselves and share information about themselves, the ages of children, and their major concerns. They are encouraged to set appropriate goals that are consistent with the aims of the group. Group leaders explain the major purpose of the group and set general boundaries for the group interaction.

2nd session

This session takes up general communication issues as thay relate to communicating with the children and the ex-spouse. Thomas Cordon's Parent Effectiveness Training is used to examine issues such as how to identify the emotions underlying the verbal message, how to identify problems, how to recognize when one "owns" a problem, and the like.

3rd session

This session explores methods of problem solving in more depth. The goals of the session are to provide information on problem solving methods and to encourage participants to practice these methods. Among the issues dealt with are how to identify problems, how to deal with problems once they have been identified, how to label problems and alternative solutions, and how to communicate more effectively.

4th session

This session is devoted to the presentation and discussion of child development during the first six years of life. The purpose is to assist the parent in understanding the following: the child's perception, cognition, and affective processes; the impact of divorce on the child in terms of the child's developmental stage; and age-appropriate versus symptomatic behavior.

5th session

This session is devoted to presenting and discussing child development issues from age six to adolescence. The goals are similar to those of the fourth session.

6th session

This session focuses on the mourning process so parents can understand the impact of separation/divorce on children and adults; how separation/divorce affects the interaction between the persons involved; appropriate versus problematic mourning behavior; and supportive skills to help children and adults cope with marital disruption.

7th session

This session consists of a didactic and experiential review of the previous sessions. The goals are to review and gain a perspective on the past sessions; evaluate the effectiveness of the sessions; help participants cope with the termination of the group; and help participants plan for their futures.

Groups for Children. As mentioned earlier, children are occasionally interviewed by the CCFL staff when the need arises. The initial interview with the child is devoted to exploring the child's understanding of and reactions to the divorce. The worker elicits information on what the child was told about the divorce, how he or she was told, by whom, and when. An important goal of the interview is to learn whether the child accepts the separation/divorce as irreversible or whether he or she believes that he or she or someone else can save the marriage. The worker also tries to learn what part the child believes he played in the divorce and whether he believes that he is to blame. The worker further attempts to assess the child's emotional reaction to the divorce by encouraging the expression of a range of feelings including sadness, anger, confusion, relief, fear of the future, abandonment, and denial. All this information is used by the worker to assess the child's coping style and to identify areas of strength or weakness that may be relevant to the intervention.

In addition to gathering the information outlined above, the interviewer encourages the child to consider how the future will differ from the past with regard to household management. The following questions are examples of how this is accomplished:

- What will happen when Daddy visits?
- What would you like to happen?
- Can you discuss this with Daddy and Mommy?
- Who will fix your breakfast, get you off to school, sign your report card?
- Will Mom go to work? Are you worried about Mom? Will you be able to tell her if you miss Daddy?

By posing these questions, the interviewer helps the child both emotionally and intellectually to cope with the separation process and the changed family structure that the divorce entails. The interviewer also attempts to examine with the child those things that will remain the same. Experience has shown that some children tend to overemphasize the changes in their lives and to underemphasize the continuities. An important goal of these questions is to explore the fears and fantasies that the divorce has evoked in the child and to provide the child with the opportunity to test the reality of these fears and fantasies with an objective adult.

Since most of the work at the Center is focused on enhancing parental skills, children as a rule are not seen individually. Children are seen individually, however, when they are showing symptoms as a result of a longstanding family problem, when the parents are not able to communicate with and help the children cope with the marital disruption, and when children do not improve as a result of work with the parents.

Groups for children at the Center are used to help them deal with the family crisis by making them aware that their feelings are normal, that these feelings are experienced by other children in similar situations and that it is appropriate to express the full range of these feelings. The group provides the child with the opportunity to participate in a safe setting designed to help him or her recognize, accept, and express his or her own feelings. More specifically, the groups help children deal with such issues as self-blame for the divorce, loyalty conflicts, and their involvement in the parental conflict. By dealing with these issues at the Center, the children are more able to talk about them with their parents. The goals of the group are to help the child achieve the following:

- maintain and develop relationships with peers and others, rather than withdraw into a world of fantasy, false hope, and excessive self-sympathy;
- maintain and develop constructive relationships with each parent;
- understand the reasons for the parental divorce without assuming responsibility for it;
- understand typical reactions of parents to the divorce; and,
- understand and accept his feelings; learn to verbalize his feelings and assume responsibility for his interactions with his parents.

These goals are achieved through group activities and discussions that utilize a variety of media such as art, books, storytelling, skits, and role plays. The particular media used depend on the ages of the children involved and the specific issues that they are concerned with. Each of the seven group sessions is briefly described below:

1st session

This session is devoted to getting the children to know each other and explaining the purpose of the group. Children learn that they all are experiencing separation and/or divorce and that the group will deal with their reactions to this event.

2nd session

This session focuses on general feelings and reactions to the divorce. The following issues are explored: how they felt at the time of their parents' separation; how they were told about the separation; who told them; what part they believe they played in the separation/divorce; and what specific changes and continuities they have experienced in their lives as a result of the divorce.

3rd session

The focus on feelings is continued in this session. The next few sessions help children recognize and accept their feelings, learn how these feelings can make them act in certain ways; and learn how they can express their feelings once they understand them.

4th session

Children continue to discuss feelings based on assigned readings.

5th session

Children act out a story and discuss how they felt being different characters

6th session

Children examine why their parents may react in certain ways to the separation or divorce. They discuss the following issues and the way which parents may react to them: visitation, name calling, role changes of parents, finances and child support; limit setting; and continued conflict between the parents.

7th session

In this session, the children review material from the previous session and begin termination by talking about what they learned from the group, as well as what they liked and what they did not like about the group.

Follow-up session

A follow-up session is held two to three months after the last session to assess how the children are progressing and to ease the termination process.

It should be stressed that the staff of CCFC frequently revise both the content and the format of the parent and child group sessions described above. Revisions of the program are based on the specific needs of the individuals participating and on what the staff have learned to be effective from previous sessions. Therefore, agencies wishing to replicate the program are advised to carefully assess the needs and characteristics of their target population and to adapt the CCFC approach accordingly. Because CCFC primarily serves a white middle-class clientele, adaptation of the CCFC approaches is especially recommended for agencies serving a different type of population.

Indirect Services

As noted earlier, a major goal of the Center is to work with professionals and lay people who come into contact with divorcing families to enhance their awareness of the social and emotional needs of these families. To this end, consultations have been provided to the staff of the social services department of a children's hospital, Neighborhood Legal Services, community mental health centers, groups of clergymen and priests, pediatricians, teachers, school counselors, professional associations of children and youth workers, and staff of several social service agencies. In addition, consultation services have been provided to several lay groups such as parents associated with a day care center, parents in a community college course on divorce, and several lay religious groups.

The purpose of these consultations is to create community support for children and families experiencing marital dissolution by sensitizing both lay and professional groups to some of the problems and needs faced by these families. The hope is to enhance their understanding of various family forms, reduce stereotypes regarding children of divorce, enlarge their understanding of the social and emotional changes associated with divorce, and reduce stereotypes of and bias against the father in divorcing families.

Evaluation

A two-year evaluation of the Center's services was concluded in January 1979 with funding from the Buhl Foundation of Pittsburgh. The impact and effectiveness of the services were evaluated in terms of the general question: Are parents learning and using the knowledge, skills, and behaviors taught in the individual and group sessions?

The first six months of the evaluation were spent in clarifying the service goals, systematizing and formalizing the service procedures, and developing the evaluation design and instruments. The instruments developed for the evaluation have been fully integrated into the ongoing program. They not only provide relevant, precise information about the parents' progress throughout their participation in the program, but they also serve as valuable tools for the training and supervision of staff and students.

In designing the evaluation, the staff decided that there were six major Parent Competency Areas that were the focus of the Centers' services. The evaluation questions that were structured around these competency areas are as follows:

Parent-Child Skills:

1. To what extent does parent relate critical, child-relevant information to the child about the separation/divorce? (Child-Relevant Information)

2. To what extent does parent listen and respond effectively to the child's feelings, needs and concerns following the divorce decision? (Child Needs)

3. To what extent does parent share her/his own feelings about the separation/divorce with child? (Parent Feelings)

Parent-Parent Skills:

4. To what extent has this parent implemented a concrete and realistic visitation plan? (Is there a plan?) To what extent has parent considered the needs of the child in establishing a visitation plan? (Visitation Plan)

5. To what extent has this parent dealt with the other parent about the visitation? (Parent-Parent Visitation)

6. To what degree does this parent communicate with the other parent about child-related issues? (Parent-Parent Communication)

These Parent Competency Areas form the basis for goal setting and contracting in the individual, groups, and family interventions. Since the major goal of the services is to enhance parental competency, the impact of the services on the children in the groups was not evaluated directly.

The major goal of the evaluation was to assess the Center's impact on 64 parents who participated in the services and who completed the evaluation procedures. The impact of the services was assessed through a pre-service rating, an interim rating, a post-service rating, and a follow-up questionnaire. For 55 other families who did not complete all aspects of the evaluation, less complete data was available. Information concerning the possible impact of the services on children was obtained through several intensive interviews with families who had participated at the Center.

Results of the evaluation were positive. Specifically, the findings showed that gains were stronger in the area of Parent-Child Skills than in the area of Parent-Parent Skills, and that gains were more substantial when the client and the worker contracted to work on specific skills.

With regard to the area of Parent-Parent Skills, the evaluation findings showed that changes were more difficult both to effect initially and to maintain after the clients had ended their contact with the Center. This finding is not surprising in view of the nature of the divorce process which generally finds ex-spouses trying to disengage from one another in a mourning process consisting of several stages. With both goals four and five, contracting was found to be especially important. The sixth goal, other child-related Parent-Parent communication proved to be the most difficult of all.

Replication

Successful replication of the CCFC requires an extensive period for preparing the community, establishing relationships with a variety of human service agencies, and selecting staff with the appropriate orientation and qualifications.

A strong public relations component is essential for the success of an agency such as CCFC. This involves dissemination of information about the nature of the services through the mass media, presentations to community and professional groups, and consultation with social service agencies. It is particularly important to work with the courts and with lawyers through legal associations because it is the legal community which is often the first to come into contact with divorcing families. With social service agencics the public relations work should take the form of explaining the preventive focus of the services and mollifying any fears that the services will be competitive. The services should be viewed as a resource for these agencies and as complementing their efforts. In view of the necessity for working closely with a variety of community groups and agencies, it is vitally important for the initiators of the service to be known and trusted within the community.

Staff of the proposed services should have a thorough understanding of and commitment to the preventive approach in mental health. They must be able to focus on the healthy aspects of the client and not search for pathology. The focus should be on identifying the successful coping abilities of the clients and their adaptation to stress and family change. Clinical training with adults, children and families is also essential. Staff must be able to understand individual and family dynamics, not only to work with the clients but also to identify those in need of more traditional clinical treatment. Staff should also be thoroughly knowledgeable regarding the parent educational model used in the services.

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APPENDIX 5

FAMILIES OF DIVORCE WORKSHOP AGENDA

TOPEKA, KANSAS

FIRST DAY

(1) Introduction and Orientation

Staff, with name tags, greet the participants as they arrive at noon on the first day of the workshop. The participants gather in the large front room for the introductions and orientation. The staff introduce themselves, explain the purposes of the workshop, and provide the participants with coffee and other light refreshments.

(2) Icebreaker

After the brief orientation, the adults form one group and the children and adolescents form another.

Adult group. This group begins with an explanation of the ground rules of the workshop. The parents are told that strict confidentiality must be maintained regarding the information that is shared in the workshop; that any disagreements are to be settled in a nonviolent manner; and that parents are responsible for their children during the lunch hour on the following day. Next, the parents play the "icebreaker game." Each parent is asked to choose an adjective describing himself or herself that begins with the first letter of his or her name (e.g., anxious Annie). The next person in the circle is then asked to repeat the name and adjective of the preceding persons and to make up an adjective to fit his or her own name. The process continues until all the participants are introduced. This exercise serves the purpose not only of establishing an informal atmosphere and introducing participants to each other, but also of providing an opportunity for the staff to begin to develop some tentative ideas of how each participant views himself or herself and how cooperative the group is in helping others to complete the exercise.

After the exercise, participants are asked to share with the group in general terms why they have come to the workshop, what their general family situation is, and what they expect to get out of the workshops. If necessary, staff may further clarify the goals of the workshop and correct any inappropriate expectations (e.g., that the group is going to be primarily therapeutic). Finally, the participants plan for the potluck lunch on the following day when they will be responsible for bringing food and when both custodial and noncustodial parents will have the responsibility for planning activities for their children during the lunch on the following day.

Children's and adolescents' group. Children and adolescents begin their group by eating the sack lunch they have been told to bring and by sharing additional food they have been told to bring for the other children. They are then told about the rules governing nonviolence and confidentiality and participants introduce themselves to each other. The informal, nonthreatening atmosphere established during the lunch encourages the children to relax, thereby easing their transition into the workshop.

(3) Divorce Triangle* (whole group)

This presentation helps parents and children distinguish between the continuing role of the parent and the ending of the role as spouse. The diagrams shown in Figure 1 below are used as visual aids to convey the message that although the marital role of the parents is ending, they still will continue in their parental roles. The group leader explains that the marital partners started out as individuals; they were married and established themselves in their spousal roles; then they had children and began to interact with one another as both parents and spouses and to the children as parents. With the divorce, the relationship of the parents as spouses is severed, but they continue to relate to each other as parents and to the children as parents. This discussion helps to clear up the confusion of both parents and children as to how the divorce affects the structure of the post-divorce family.

(4) Breakup Film (whole group)

This is a 25 minute "trigger film" produced by the WNET Inside Out Educational Series (1975) to bring to all family members an awareness of the emotional shock and struggle experienced by children of divorce. It depicts two children dealing with the strong feelings aroused by the divorce of their parents. It shows the pain, loss, and reconciliation fantasies that are commonly experienced by children of divorce.

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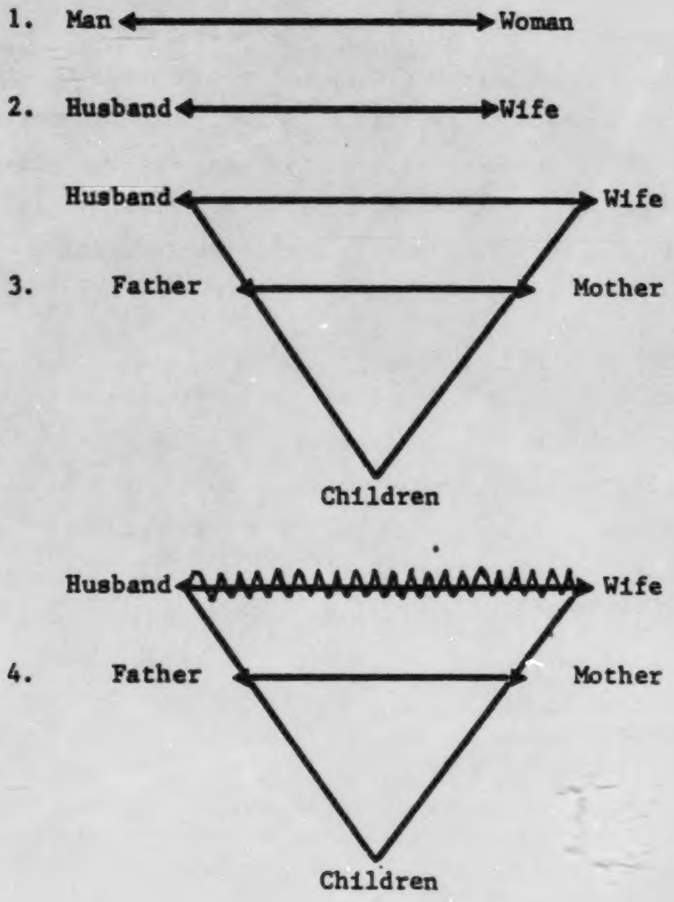
*"Divorce Triangle" is adapted from a paper by Becky Norris entitled "New Beginnings for Singles," Johnson County Mental Health Center, 1975, p. 25.

Figure 1

Divorce Triangle


1. Man Woman
2. Husband Wife
Husband Wife
3. Father Mother
Children
Husband Wife
4. Father Mother
Children

Divorce is the ending of the husband-wife relationship but the continuation of the parental relationship and responsibilities.

(5) Small Groups

Small discussion groups afford parents and children an opportunity to think through, explore, and gain a more personalized understanding of some of the issues raised in the "Divorce Triangle" presentation and in the "Breakup" Film. Two groups are provided for parents so that ex-spouses need not be in the same group when more personal feelings are shared. Children and adolescents meet in a combined group to react to the film and the presentation. In the experience of the group leaders, children at this point in the program begin to express a fuller range of emotional reactions, triggered by the film, which shows a variety of emotional reactions. The group leaders encourage children and adolescents to share their feelings by asking questions such as: Do you ever feel like the girl and the boy in the film?

(6) Presentations and Small-Group Activities

Participants are divided into three small groups: one for all parents, one for children, and one for adolescents.

Adult group. The group leader presents material delineating the emotional stages[3] commonly experienced by those going through separation and divorce so parents can understand their emotional reactions to the divorce adjustment process. The goal is to make couples aware that what they are experiencing is a normal, although painful, reaction to divorce and separation. The stages of separation and divorce are as follows:

1. Disillusionment Stage:

Disillusionment occurs when the spouses realize that there are significant differences between them in terms of housekeeping preferences, parental styles, social relationships, and the like. This is the stage when romantic expectations begin to fade, and spouses begin to act more realistically toward one another. When parents do not handle this stage by mutual negotiations, their marriage may evolve into the next stage.

2. Erosion Stage:

During this stage, minor irritations and dissatisfactions between the spouses begin to be expressed in subtle putdowns, sneers, irresponsibility, and passive neglect. Anger, distrust, and insecurity grow as the spouses begin to question the marriage and its rewards. If the couple can resolve these disappointments and irritations, the marriage can be improved. If not, the next stage frequently follows.

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[3] Adapted from Kessler, The American Way of Divorce. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975.

3. Detachment Stage:

In this stage, the spouses emotionally detach themselves from each other. Ambivalence, apathy, and anger mark their interactions. Spouses may begin to tentatively anticipate and prepare for single life by establishing separate bank accounts, taking separate vacations, or engaging in an extramarital affair.

4. Physical Separation Stage:

The time when spouses physically separate is perhaps the most traumatic period in the entire dissolution process. Some people feel an enormous relief, while others who are less prepared experience a severe emotional reaction. Common emotional reactions include rapid mood swings, increased sensitivity to feedback, and withdrawal from social relationships. Individuals must deal with such issues as what to tell their family and friends and how to make do on a lower standard of living.

5. Mourning Stage:

This stage occurs when the divorcing person reaches the point of no return. Although feelings of love may remain, the person realizes that the marriage is over and that he or she must begin preparing for a new life as a single person. Individuals may experience anger, profound sadness over the loss, and guilt.

6. Second Adolescence Stage:

In this stage, individuals may experience an upswing in emotions and a desire to explore the social world open to the single individual. They may engage in an excessive number of activities including travel, hobbies, clubs, new lifestyles, sex, and dating. These activities may represent a search for a new identity. Drastic changes in lifestyles are not uncommon, and old friends may be supplanted by new ones who reinforce the new values.

7. Hard Work Stage:

This is the end of the divorce adjustment process. The distrust of intimacy may have waned, allowing the person to establish a satisfying relationship with a new mate. Divorced persons may experience a new confidence, a new depth, and a new sense of mastery over their lives.

Following the presentation of the emotional stages of divorce, the parents meet in small discussion groups to share their reactions. The discussion at this point is usually unstructured and informal, with no need for an agenda. The participants now begin to gain a perspective on their divorce experience, since they have the tools to place themselves at one of the stages of divorce discussed. In a sense, they now have a road map of the divorce experience and are able to see where they have been and where they are going. By understanding the various stages of the divorce process, parents can also understand why they may be reacting to their children in certain ways. For example, during the detachment stage, parents may have a tendency to push their children away even though the children may feel a need at this time to cling to their parents. In general, at this stage of the workshop the participants are able to freely share their feelings and to be supportive of each other. At the end of the group, which is the last experience of the day, the parents are encouraged to share some of the feelings and experiences with their children in the evening. They are encouraged to listen to the children if they want to talk about their experiences and to share their own experiences and feelings with the children. At this point, the children and the parents are usually very curious as to what the other group is doing.

Children's small group. Children meet in small groups for a series of exercises and games designed to help them understand and cope with their feelings regarding divorce as well as to help them communicate with their parents. One such game is the "T-shirt" game, which helps the children to explore the way they really feel as opposed to the image they try to project to their friends and others. Each child is given a paper T-shirt and asked to draw a face on the front depicting the way they think others see them and a face on the back representing how they really feel about themselves. The discrepancies between the two images are then discussed by the group.

Next, the children view the "Sky is Falling"[4] filmstrip accompanied by a cassette. This filmstrip depicts two chilren who are doing poorly in school because of a divorce in their family. They are seen talking to a school psychologist about their reactions to the divorce and about the family situation.

The last event of the day for the children's group is a "wrap-up" session reviewing the activities of the day and further discussing their concerns. The group leaders also explore with the children how they can share their experiences during the day with their parents that evening at home. They discuss which parent they will be with that evening and what it will be like. Additionally, the children spend some time preparing for the next day's activities, which will include drawing, making murals, and producing a play expressing some of their concerns and feelings about the divorce. The products of these activities will be shared with the parents on the afternoon of the following day and it is hoped that the children will be able to communicate with the parents through their art.

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[4] "The Sky is Falling: A Program for Children of Divorce" (filmstrip and audiotape) by M. Galant and L. Leighton. The Unin Free School District, Port Washington, New York.

Adolescents' small group. Adolescents meet in small groups separate from the younger children to explore in more depth their reactions and feelings about the divorce. The staff have found that adolescents tend to be somewhat guarded and reluctant to discuss personal issues in this kind of setting. Accordingly, a variety of methods are used to facilitate the discussion. For example, the "Divorce Triangle" presentation can serve as a point of departure in discussing such issues as parental sexuality, the situation in a stepfamily, and the like. Another effective way for getting the discussion started is a tape made from a letter from a youth at the Children's Hospital to his mother who has recently gone through a divorce. The tape represents a particularly poignant expression by the youth of his reactions to the divorce and his unsuccessful attempts to bottle up the feelings aroused by it.

A period of physical activity, such as jogging, playing Frisbee, or walking, is an integral part of the afternoon because the discussions generate a considerable amount of tension, which needs to be dissipated through physical exercise.

The final activity of the afternoon is the planning of a project for the next day that is designed to share the young people's feelings and attitudes with the parents in a variety of ways. These activities can include putting together a skit, producing a newspaper, composing a song, producing a mural, or bringing a record to play for the parents expressing how the youth may feel about the family experience. Children are encouraged to be creative with their projects, and staff remain flexible in their approach so that this activity is successful.

SECOND DAY

(1) Start-Up

This is a brief welcome and presentation of the agenda for the day.

(2) Small Group

Parents. Parents meet in two small groups to discuss their experiences with their children the previous evening. Frequently, the children have thrown temper tantrums, awakened crying in the night, or experienced nightmares as they start to deal with some of the anger that has been bottled up. Parents discuss how they handled these events and their meaning. Progress or problems in communicating with the children are also taken up at this time. As for the parents, they tend to be calmer and more honest with themselves and others at this point in the program. They have a better sense of how they are dealing with the adjustment process and of some of the problems that lie ahead in their lives.

Children's and adolescents' group. Children and adolescents meet jointly to discuss their feelings and interactions with their parents the previous evening and to prepare for the rest of the day. The major activity is a discussion of how parents, children, and youth react to divorce. Material from Wallerstein and Kelly's study of divorcing families is presented in age-appropriate terms to explain typical patterns of adjustment to divorce. With adolescents, the group leader is fairly straightforward in discussing how children, parents, and youth may react to divorce. With younger children, the group leader may encourage them to draw faces and pictures to express how different members of their families cope with separation and divorce.

(3) Pain Games Film[5]

This portion of the program consists of a series of video presentations of the interpersonal "games" that occur while family members try to cope with the crisis of divorce. It focuses on frequent and understandable, though conflict-producing, interactions between parents and their children that reflect the pain, hurt, and anger felt by the parents and are often unintentionally passed on to their children with destructive results. Parents and children viewing these interactions can be helped to learn to develop communication skills to avoid such unintentional interactions.

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[5] A videotape developed by the Johnson County Community Mental Health Center, Olathe, Kansas.

The seven different "games" are as follows:

1. "Don't worry, it'll be O.K."--in which the parent copes with feelings about the divorce by denying that any changes will occur in the relationship with the children, or that the children will be affected by the divorce.

2. "Messenger" game--use of the children to carry messages between the spouses--e.g., "Tell your mother (or father) such and such" which illustrates that none of the family members can give the other straight, honest, or direct messages.

3. "Cutdown" game--another communication pattern illustrating the anger of the spouses toward each other but taken out on the children with destructive effect on development of the child's identity. For example, a parent who may say in anger to the child, "Your father is an SOB," makes the child feel he too is an SOB.

4. "Disneyland daddy" game--characterized by vacation-type visits to the father who buys and does things for the child he would not ordinarily be able to afford. This demonstrates the parent's insecurity and guilt about the divorce and leaves the child disgruntled about going back to the routine, work, and problems entailed in living with the mother.

5. "I spy" game--asking the child to report on the absent spouse's activity, e.g., "Is your mother dating anyone?" "Who is your father going out with?" This game may be an attempt of the spouses to "hang on to each other."

6. In the "friendly divorce" game, attempts of the spouses to continue to be friends is a way of denying the reality of conflicts that caused the separation and the conflicts which continue. These attempts confuse the children about what is happening.

7. "I wish" game--demonstrates the major theme, the central task that children of divorce have to resolve, their wish that the good times would return and that their parents would get back together.

Following the "Pain Games" film, large group discussion is encouraged to help the participants recognize and acknowledge their involvement in the "pain games" depicted in the film. Participants are also encouraged to identify specific ways they can extricate themselves from such unhealthy interactions.

(4) Small Groups

Parents. Parents meet in small groups to discuss the "pain games" that they may be playing with other family members. They also prepare for the upcoming "laboratory lunch" during which they are asked to apply some of the skills and understandings they have gained during the program to a family issue of significance. For example, parents may talk with the ex-spouse about issues raised by the "Pain Games" film, or they may attempt to resolve some issues centering on visitation. They also need to negotiate who the children will eat lunch with.

Children and adolescents. Children and adolescents meet in separate groups to discuss the "Pain Games" film and to prepare activities for the afternoon. The children sometimes play "Roving Reporter" (modeled after Sesame Street), focusing on divorce-related issues, or they may use puppets to put on a play around a divorce-related theme. As for the adolescents, they continue to plan the project that they will later present to the parents.

During the lunch period the group leaders meet to identify and discuss the salient issues that each family appears to be coping with. These issues may include custody or visitation problems, "pain game" interactions, child behavior problems, and conflict between the parents. On the basis of the issues identified, the staff formulate recommendations to be presented to each family at the end of the day, during the large group feedback session.

(5) Small Groups, Presentations, and Activities

Parents. Parents meet in two small groups to review what happened at lunch. They are encouraged to compare the goals they had set for lunch with the actual outcome and to explore why the goals may not have been met. For example, in a recent group, a mother discussed her unsuccessful attempt to negotiate with her ex-spouse to have lunch with her two noncustodial sons.

After these small-group discussions, the parents meet together in one group for a presentation and discussion of how children of various ages commonly react to divorce, based on the findings of Wallerstein and Kelly. This general discussion of children's reactions to divorce is followed by a more specific discussion of the problems that each family has faced with its children. At this point in the workshop, the staff usually have a great deal of information on how the children in attendance are coping with their parents' divorce; and this information is used to relate the general principles discussed to specific cases.

Children. Children meet in a small group to complete work on their murals with a divorce-related theme. The children are told, "This is your time to send a message to your parents." The staff work closely with the children on the murals to make sure their messages are clear to the parents.

Adolescents. Adolescents continue to work on their project.

(6) Review of Murals and Small-Group Meetings

Parents. Parents review the children's murals and the adolescents' projects. They then meet in two small groups to discuss what they have learned regarding their children as a result of these activities.

Children and adolescents. Children and adolescents meet in a group to formulate the messages they want sent to the parents at the end of the day. Group leaders usually tell the children what recommendations they are going to make to the parents and ask if anything else should be said.

(7) Feedback Session (whole group)

During this session, attended by both parents and children, the staff give specific feedback to each family regarding the issues it must deal with. Feedback usually begins by identifying areas of accomplishment where the family has worked hard to resolve problems. It then turns to unresolved issues which need further work. Staff are very specific and direct with the feedback. For example, the mother in a family recently attending a workshop had been telling her children (untruthfully) that there was no money for food because the father was not sending any and that the father was living with a "whore." She was told to stop these exaggerations and to stop setting up a loyalty conflict among the children. Children are also told to stop whatever manipulations of the parents they are doing. In getting specific messages across, the staff make use of the "jargon" that the families have learned by now, e.g., "pain game" terms. With observations and recommendations that are potentially problematic and embarassing (e.g., a child is found to be emotionally disturbed and in need of treatment) the staff gives the family general feedback during the large group meeting and invites them in after the workshop to discuss the details of their situation. The staff view their task during the feedback sessions as not one of telling the families anything new about their situation but rather as one of sharing their observations and recommendations in a concise manner.

The staff has observed that most families experience a strong sense of emotional relief after the feedback sessions. The families feel that others understand their situation and that their problems can now be dealt with more openly. They also feel that they are no longer helpless because they have a sense of direction and have been given the tools to begin coping with their problems. The children and adolescents in particular feel that they now have some way of preventing themselves from being victimized by their parent's conflict. They believe not only that they have been given permission to talk about their concerns with their parents but also that their parents are now more willing to listen to them. In addition, the children believe that the workshop gives them the tools (e.g., "pain game" terms) to extricate themselves from the parental conflict. This is in keeping with the general message of the workshop, namely, that the parental conflict is between the parents and that the children should not be involved in it.

APPENDIX 6

CURRICULUM FOR
UNDERSTANDING FAMILY CHANGE PROGRAM

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The following curriculum is intended to be a model. Because of the personal and sensitive nature of the curriculum content, it is suggested that group leaders be thoroughly familiar with family change literature, be trained in the use of small group skills, and possess a deep sensitivity and regard for the emotions of group members and their families.

Leaders of family change groups are encouraged to begin with the following curriculum and slowly adapt it to meet the ever-changing needs of the community served and individual participants. Although the content is of great importance, the process followed is critical to the success of the groups. If one feels comfortable with the process, the curriculum will flow out of the statements of group members.

Two major goals have been stressed, 1. to support students who may be experiencing family change by providing insight and self-understanding related to the process, and 2. to provide an educational experience for all students on a voluntary basis that will prepare them to understand the dimensions of family change when they encounter it.

The curriculum is covered in ten consecutive daily sessions one half hour in length for primary age children. Older children may cover the same material in five consecutive daily sessions of one hour each. Groups contain a maximum of 15 students. The curriculum is divided into five major areas: (1) definition of a family, (2) personal loss within the family context, (3) conflict in family change, (4) emotional reactions to family change, and (5) the new family situation.

A social problem solving model has been utilized in this project emphasizing the role of the group members in determining specific curricular emphasis. Children come into the groups for various reasons, with various needs, and at different developmental levels.

If the leader focuses on the daily objective addressing general concepts, children will be given the opportunity to fit their own experiences into the broader framework.

The model is used primarily for teaching, not for therapy. By broadening children's experiences with family change, the group leader creates an open and secure environment that fosters the developmental growth of the participants. The model is seen as a circular process with movement through each step thus leading to a greater awareness and opportunity to acquire skills.

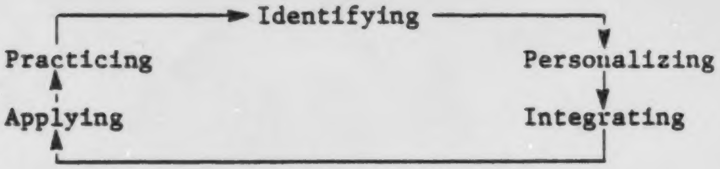

Figure 1. A problem-solving model

Throughout the group sessions children will identify and personalize events or ideas that are related to the daily concept to be covered. The leader helps them to integrate their knowledge and feelings about specific family change issues while exploring appropriate coping measures. This is done by helping the children experience specific situations vicariously through observation, reading, listening etc., within the group setting. Once children have discovered certain skills, the leader encourages practice through the use of role-play and psycho-drama. As children play out important life dramas they are able to identify more aspects of the impact of family change in their own lives. Thus, the cycle repeats itself with the added dimension of new skills, information, dialogue and feedback.

The bibliography contains a select list of materials to be used at the discretion of the group leaders.

I. Objective: To increase awareness of the many kinds of family structures in which children live, i.e. two parent, single parent, communal, etc.

Session I

Group members introduce themselves and tell why they are taking the family change class.

Group leader introduces the concept of family by asking "What is a family?" Discussion should reflect differently composed families.

Children view filmstrip "What's a Family" and discuss it. Leader should help children see different relationships within a family such as children and parents, child and siblings, grandparents and children, and parent to parent relationships.

Session II

Children construct their own families and tell the group about the constructions. Leaders may elect to have children make a human sculpture of their family with members of the group. Clay or paint may also be used for constructions.

Discussion should focus on the uniqueness of each family and the differing family compositions.

II. Objective: To develop understanding of the inevitability of family changes and to explore some methods of coping with such changes.

Session III

Leader elicits personal experiences with family change such as divorce, death of a relative or pet, a move, parent going to work or school, etc.

Children select a situation dealing with a specific change mentioned in group and role-play some aspect of the change. One such play could be how the birth of child changes family member roles, responsibilities and resultant feelings.

Session IV

Leader reads a children's book which is about a family change. The Terrible Thing That Happened at Our House, by Marge Blaine,* is a good example. In this book a mother returns to work which causes all sorts of readjustments by other family members.

Discussion of the selected book should focus on how the problems resulting from the change were resolved. Leader should help children look at a variety of solutions to a single problem. The above-named book especially demonstrates this.

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*Other books may be selected from the bibliography.

III. Objective: To become aware of the inevitability of family conflict and to explore a variety of skills in coping with and handling conflict.

Session V

Read Rosie and Michael by Judith Viorst.
Discussion should focus on the definition of conflict, conflict in relationships, and resolution of conflict. Help children to identify conflict situations in which they have been involved and how the conflict was resolved.

Session VI

Role-play a situation where parents come home from work to find house not picked up by kids. The ensuing argument results in one parent storming out and the other left with children who all continue to argue with each other.

Discussion should focus on the nature of the interactions of family members, the feelings of the family members, and the nature of the conflict.

Role-play this family trying to resolve this conflict. Example: The role-play may be a family discussion centered on delegating equal responsibilities and blame to each family member within the conflict.

The leader should help children understand that conflict is present in all relationships and changes to a lesser or greater degree.

IV Objective: To identify mixed feelings and begin to explore methods of expressing them.

Session VII

Read and Discuss "Where is Daddy? The Story of a Divorce."

Discussion should center on the emotional reaction of family members involved in change.

Elicit responses of children regarding feelings they've had in change. From their experiences, choose a situation and role-play it stressing the feelings of participants. For example, children often want to role-play the situation where parents tell their children about an impending divorce. Discussion of these plays should focus on ways to cope with changes children have no control over.

Session VIII

Show Guidance Associates filmstrip "Not Together Anymore." Discuss mixed feelings and ways to express those feelings positively. Compare Janey Dear's feelings in Where's Daddy? with the feelings of children in filmstrip.

V. Objective: To explore new family structures and methods for coping with these structures.

Session IX

Read Judith Viorst's book The Tenth Good Thing About Barney. Discuss feelings brought about by the death of a pet, relative, or friend. Elicit children's experiences with death. Ask, "What kind of things can you do after you experience a loss?" Recall stories and filmstrips used earlier and how children coped with loss in these.

From children's related experiences, choose a role-play. Leaders should help children dramatize how changing events may change how you act as well as how you feel. For example, one role-play might be: A child who has just moved and lost a pet becomes quiet and stays by himself more. He gets angry at his parents and sisters who try to be friendly to him. What should he do? What should the other family members do?

Session X

Invite an adult who has recently experienced a family change to the group. Ask adult to talk with children about how (s)he felt as well as how (s)he thought the family members felt during and after the change. Adult should talk about his/her new family situation mentioning both positive and negative aspects.

If no adult is available, ask children if they think they can stop things from changing. Ask how they think their lives will change and what they can do about the changes. Ask children to share how a major event such as a divorce, death, move, etc., changed their lives. Ask children to make assumptions about how adults who experienced change may have felt.

Conclude by reviewing major concepts covered in group and helping children express emotions they might have regarding termination of the group.

Books For Family Change Curriculum

Blaine, Marge
The Terrible Thing That Happened At Our House. New York: Parents Magazine Press, 1975.

Dobrin, Arnold
Scat. New York: Four Winds, 1971.

Fassler, Joan
My Grandpa Died Today. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1971.

Gardner, Richard A., M.D.
The Boys' and Girls' Book About Divorce. New York: Bantam, 1970.

Goff, Beth
Where Is Daddy? The Story of a Divorce. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.

LaShon, Eda
What Makes Me Feel This Way? Growing Up With Human Emotions. New York: Collier Books, 1972.

Lichtman, W.
Blew and The Death of the Mag. Albion, Calif: Freestone Publishing Company, 1975.

Stull, Edith G.
My Turtle Died Today. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Viorst, Judith
I'll Fix Anthony. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

Viorst, Judith
My Mama Says There Aren't Any Zombies, Ghost, Vampires, Creatures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends, Goblins, or Things. New York: Atheneum, 1974.

Viorst, Judith
The Tenth Good Thing About Barney. New York: Atheneum, 1975.

Filmstrips

Understanding Changes in the Family, Guidance Associates.

APPENDIX 7

STEPFAMILY FOUNDATION OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER SELF-HELP GROUPS

The Stepfamily Foundation of California has created self-help groups for remarried couples. Each group consists of three to six couples who meet weekly or every other week to discuss remarriage and stepparenting problems and to share common experiences. One couple in each self-help group acts as the coordinator for the group. Coordination is rotated among members if desired. Every two to three months a consultant (who is a certified mental health professional or group facilitator) from the local Foundation chapter meets with the group to provide resource information. Participants generally meet in one another's homes, at mutually agreed-upon times. Couples may stay in the group for as long as they wish.

Remarried couples become eligible for the self-help group once they join the local chapter of the Stepfamily Foundation. Each chapter selects a Self-Help Chair who coordinates intake for the groups. When a couple expresses interest in the self-help groups, they are placed in an existing group. In the event that all groups are full, couples participate as "visitors" to an existing group until a new group is formed. When couples join either as visitors or members, they are given a copy of the guidelines for the Stepfamily Foundation Self-Help Groups. These guidelines explain the group communication rules. When a couple drops from the group, the Self-Help Chair is notified and a new couple is introduced to the group.

The Self-Help Chair also monitors the appropriateness of the group for each particular couple. If at intake the Chair considers other services to be more appropriate for a particular couple, then this is discussed with the Self-Help Consultant, and recommendations are made to the couple. In the event that a couple finds that their needs are not being met by self-help, they are encouraged to speak with the Self-Help Consultant about other available services for stepfamilies.

Every three months one couple from each self-help group meets with the State Division Board of Directors. Couples in each group attend these meetings on a rotating basis so that everyone has an opportunity to express the concerns, the successes, and the suggestions of their particular group.

In addition to the self-help groups, the Stepfamily Foundation offers an eight-hour Stepparent Survival Course. Although participation in this course is recommended for couples wishing to join self-help groups, it is not mandatory. Many groups have devoted group time to the course.

For more information about the Stepfamily Foundation of California, contact:

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APPENDIX 8

THE DIVORCED KIDS GROUP

LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The Divorced Kids Group was created in 1976 at Lexington High School to provide informal peer support to youth whose parents are separated, divorced, or remarried. A guidance counselor at the high school, who was instrumental in developing the group, serves as the Advisor to the group.

The goals of the non-credit group are to help youth cope with the continuing difficulties associated with separation, divorce, or remarriage within the family, to promote youth advocacy in the separation and divorce process, and to provide information and structured activities that will increase students' knowledge of family change processes, and reduce feelings of loss, confusion, and isolation.

Students meet once a week during a lunch break to plan activities and discuss issues and experiences of concern. Meetings take place in the guidance counselor's office, which also serves as a drop-in center where students can post notices and announcements. The activities of the group focus upon information sessions, activity planning, and group discussions. Issues and topics of concern to participants include legal rights of youth, visitation procedures, alimony, financial aid for college, and coping strategies. The group has been visited by local lawyers, psychologists and other mental health professionals, and family studies professors who provide information and answer questions. Members have been involved in various outreach activities, such as presentations at local schools, as well as a number of media events, several at the national level. A core group of student participants perform administrative functions, such as scheduling appointments and iniating and responding to correspondence.

Students are recruited into the group by word of mouth, and teacher or guidance counselor referral. Participation in the group is not required, and parental permission need not be obtained. However, parents' requests that their children not participate in the group are honored. The membership size has grown as high as 20 students in the past; however, group meetings are generally attended by 10 or fewer students. Males appear to be more reluctant to participate in the group. Females and eleventh and twelfth graders constitute the majority of members.

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APPENDIX 9

SINGLE PARENT ACTION NETWORK
North Shore Child Guidance Center

Long Island, New York

Overview

The Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) is sponsored by the North Shore Child Guidance Center in Long Island, New York. The Center offers mental health services to all children and families, but is particularly concerned with helping families survive the crisis of divorce and widowhood and easing their transition into new lifestyles. This concern led to the development of SPAN, which offers several programs for single parents.

SPAN is staffed by a social worker and single parent "natural helpers," who have been trained by the social worker to provide peer counseling and to administer various aspects of the program. The program is designed to encourage the development of mutual aid among single parents by offering the following programs:

> Community Meetings for Single Parents--these monthly meetings, open to the public, feature guest speakers who discuss issues of concern to single parents.
>
> Short-Term Action Oriented Groups--these small groups of 10 to 13 individuals led by a social worker and "natural helper" meet for 10 sessions and actively promote the concept of mutual aid. Groups have been formed for separated and divorced parents, widows and widowers, and children of divorce.
>
> Drop-in Center--this center provides financial counseling, crisis intervention, referral information services, and an opportunity for informal conversation.

The community education workshops forum provides an opportunity for disseminating information about other services offered by SPAN. In addition, participants receive SPAN's monthly newsletter, which has information about upcoming events.

A social worker has been instrumental in planning and coordinating the services offered by SPAN. She hopes, however, eventually to train the single parents themselves to take some of the responsibility for planning and coordinating the services. Although a few single parents have already offered their time and have been trained to take over various functions associated with the services, the nature of single parent problems, particularly time-management, makes it necessary for the social worker to continue to play a major role in the program.

Setting

The North Shore Child Guidance Center, with clinics located in Manhasset, Great Neck, Roslyn, and Westbury, New York, serves seven communities in the Long Island-Nassau County area. Founded in 1956, the Center is presently a major facility for consultation, counseling, and treatment of children and their families. It is funded by the Nassau County Department of Mental Health and by the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene.

A staff of psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, and social service assistants offer an array of mental health services to children, adolescents, and their families. Clinical services include psychodiagnostic assessments; individual, family, and group therapy (short and long-term); crisis intervention; and pharmacotherapy. Between 300 to 400 clients are seen each month by all of the combined services on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. In almost all cases, children are the initial clients seen, with parents and other family members seen subsequently when appropriate. About 70% of the clients are White (with 50% of this group being Jewish), another 20-25% are Black, and the remainder is Hispanic. This population reflects the racial composition of Nassau County. Twenty percent of all clients seen receive Medicaid benefits. The Manhasset office, which sees the greatest number of clients each month, has the lowest number of Medicaid recipients (2% of its presenting population). Westbury and Roslyn, the second and third-busiest offices, have the highest numbers of Medicaid recipients (36% and 18% respectively). School referrals constitute the majority of intakes for all offices (averaging 42% of all intakes), with 24% of referrals by parents, 5% of referrals from the courts, 4% self-referrals, and approximately 3% of referrals from physicians.

In the mid-1970s, the Center created two new programs--The Aid to Adolescents Program and The Family Life Center--in response to perceived increases in adolescent drug and alcohol abuse, runaway incidents, and separation and divorce. The Aid to Adolescents Program was created to minimize delinquent behavior. It provides counseling and family therapy and educational aid work experiences and builds a network of support within the community for the adolescent.

The Family Life Center, which includes SPAN, was created to provide short-term services and community education to help families through transitions and to deal with short-term problems. A major goal of the Family Life Center is to identify and activate community and individual "natural helpers." These are community organizations in a position to offer services and support to families in special situations and individuals who are in a similiar family position themselves and who have demonstrated natural (or inherent) helping skills. These individuals are trained by Center staff to develop and enhance these skills so they can provide peer counseling and support that complements the services offered by professionals associated with the Center. Programs offered by the Family Life Center include a new mothers' group, financial management counseling, and an advocacy skills workshop.

Program Development

SPAN was developed in response to three social and demographic trends in Nassau County. First, the divorce rate in the county has quadrupled over the past four years. This dramatic increase is reflected in the types and problems of families seen at the Center. For example, over 50% of the adult clients are single parents. The needs of this group often extend beyond what can be provided by clinical services. Second, like many other suburban communities, Nassau County has been experiencing a "taxpayers' revolt," which has affected funding of services to families undergoing marital disruption. Hence, there was a perceived need for a service to this population that would fit within the social service budget. Third, the self-help movement has gained increasing acceptance as a viable adjunct to mental health professionals. The self-help approach was viewed as complementing other kinds of interventions that require considerable professional input. It was also viewed as having great potential to meet certain needs of the single parent population, such as peer support, and to provide assistance with practical problems.

After considerable discussion of these issues, the staff at the Center decided to establish a demonstration project to explore and utilize the various "natural" support systems that exist in families, neighborhoods, ethnic groups, schools, community groups and agencies, but are largely unused. They decided to focus on single parent families because they recognized the multiple problems faced by these families.

SPAN also grew out of a "mothers' group" in the Family Life Center which offered discussion of common problems with children. Almost all of the mothers who attended were single parents, and the discussions frequently centered upon the problems they encountered in their single parent roles. A divorced single parent herself, the social worker who led the group believed that a small-group format focusing on single-parent problems (child-related and otherwise) would be more appropriate for this group of women and others in similiar situations. Given the immediate needs of the women from the mothers' group, the high divorce rate, and the lack of similiar services for single parents, SPAN was easily justified.

A pilot survey was also conducted to examine the needs of single mothers from diverse ethnic backgrounds who lived in one of the communities served by the Center. Members of formal and informal neighborhood support systems were interviewed as well as single mothers from five ethnic groups. A professional from the Center helped the community to organize on its own behalf, with the professional acting as a resource person and volunteers as data collectors. A series of meetings was then held to involve the community with the professional to provide needed services, consultation, and education as determined by this population's identification of gaps in its neighborhood's formal and informal support systems for women who were single parents.

Goals and Objectives

SPAN and the other services offered by the Family Life Center focus upon developing a sense of autonomy in participants and on offering assistance in solving problems that generally are not addressed by either clinical or educational services. SPAN offers an ongoing peer support network that mitigates some of the emotional problems and practical concerns that often plague the single parent. Peer support, in the form of one-to-one peer counseling by natural helpers, small self-help sessions, a resource and referral center, and open community meetings, provides the single parent with both a sense of group identity and the actual resources to make life as a single parent easier. Although SPAN was originally planned and coordinated by a social worker (who is the only professional affiliated with SPAN), participants who demonstrate natural helping abilities and who have time to donate are trained by the social worker to both provide peer support and facilitate group meetings. Another advantage of the self-help approach lies in its reasonable cost which derives from its ability to complement professional resources and make them go further.

In this connection, an important goal of SPAN is to define the optimal relationship between self-help groups and professional agencies. The hope is that the SPAN experience can provide important guidelines and recommendations for establishing an effective partnership between lay persons and professionals within the context of the self-help approach.

Problems of Single Parents

Single parents share problems and needs that are unique to them. After their divorce, the single parent is suddenly faced with two entirely new roles, each of which has its own set of problems and needs. In his or her new role as a divorced person, the single parent has to deal with custody problems as well as with other stresses associated with the final stage of divorce (such as feelings of loss, isolation, and a breakdown of the traditional supports that were formerly a source of security). In his or her other role as single parent, these individuals have to solve problems associated with finances, childrearing, and time-management. Newly divorced single parents are often so overburdened and overwhelmed with the demands and emotional stresses of these new roles that they cannot provide the support and parenting their often traumatized children need. In addition, children of divorced parents tend to discharge their feelings of anger and blame on the custodial parent, further compounding new parent-child problems.

The social, legal and financial problems of custodial single parents and the lack of both formal and informal helping networks for this group may produce anxiety, depression, and even desperation in individuals. As a result, the single parent may withdraw further socially or become involved in frenetic social activity, which frequently results in guilt or self-blame. Problems are often intensified for single parents living in suburbia. These people may feel alienated from an environment designed specifically for the traditional nuclear family. They also face practical problems in suburbia, such as inadequate public transportation, fewer opportunities for employment, and limited housing or rental space.

SPAN was created to assist single parents with these common problems. For most single parents, (the majority of whom are women), the major concerns are: (1) impoverished relationships, both within the family and the community; (2) parenting stresses; (3) loneliness; (4) lowered self-esteem; and (5) financial difficulties. The basic premise of the program is that single parenthood is not a pathology-inducing condition to be remedied as quickly as possible by remarriage. Indeed, one major goal of SPAN is to reframe the single-parent experience from a negative to a positive one. The use of lay single-parent natural helpers in this process fosters the opportunity for identification and growth for all group participants.

Another goal of SPAN is to make natural support systems within the community more responsive to single parent needs. Religious institutions, schools, and community groups need to be sensitized to the special needs of single parents. SPAN works toward this goal by offering monthly community meetings which are open to the public and other outreach activities.

The third goal of SPAN is to enhance the problem-solving skills and mutual aid capacities among single parents. Both small group and resource center settings offer opportunities for single parents to both help one another and themselves.

Nature of Services

Direct Services. SPAN offers three direct services to single parents: a Drop-in Center, community meetings and self-help groups. The combination of services is designed to assist the group to cope with emotional stresses and with practical problems.

The Drop-in Center for single parents is open for four hours one evening each week in an easily accessible church. A single parent volunteer functions as a problem manager who meets with other single parents to help identify their problem areas and to set priorities regarding legal, financial, housing, parenting, and emotional issues. The problem manager provides information to clients and refers them to appropriate resources, using a resource file that has been developed and maintained through contact with various agencies. Clients are also informed of the nature and scope of SPAN's activities and encouraged to participate, if only at a minimal level. Single parents who are involved in SPAN have used the Drop-In Center to start a child care exchange service among themselves. In addition, other single parents have compiled for the Center a list of useful resources (such as repair services which are open Saturdays) that would be helpful to others. Single parents find out about the Drop-in Center through community meetings and SPAN's monthly newsletter.

Monthly community meetings are free to the public and do not require a fee or commitment. These meetings take place at the same church where the Drop-in Center is held (as do the self-help group meetings), since both the social worker and the Advisory Council (made up of other North Shore staff and single parent volunteers) wish to foster a self-help environment which functions independently of the professional service. The community meetings function as outreach for other SPAN activities and focus upon issues that are specifically of interest to single parents, such as career planning and financial management. Single parents who attend the community meetings later receive more information about SPAN's activities and the newsletter and are invited to attend the small group meetings.

Small self-help group meetings are held weekly at the church. The group, which consists of a maximum of 13 single parents, meets for 10 sessions, all of which are led by the social worker or by single parents who have been trained to provide help to others. The group leader acts as a facilitator, eliciting comments from all group members and keeping the discussion moving. As previously mentioned, the social worker hopes to train more single parents as group facilitators. She would then function more as a back-up person, resource person, supervisor, and consultant.

The self-help group meetings are designed to foster an exchange of ideas, feelings, and problems, and to encourage single parents to take an active role in reaching out to others. Group members are encouraged to call one another and to socialize outside of the group.

With few exceptions, the single parents who take part in these groups are female. A goal of the self-help group is to foster the attitude of positive single parenting. Women are encouraged to realistically assess their vulnerabilities and strengths and to be active, develop interests, socialize and acquire job skills.

Often the discussions within the group focus upon divorce and single parenting issues as they relate to children. Many single parents, especially those with adolescents, have to deal with a child who is depressed and very angry at the custodial parent. The social worker assists single parents in exploring ways of communicating not only with their children but also with the ex-spouse. Issues that are frequent subjects of discussion include negotiating visiting times and dealing with the ex-spouse in such a way that promotes independence and a healthy emotional separation.

At the end of the ten group sessions, group members who have been actively involved in the group may be asked by the social worker to join the Advisory Council, to help with other SPAN activities, or to be trained to be helpers in the small groups.

The Drop-In Center, community meetings, and the self-help groups all afford the social worker the opportunity to assess individual functioning. If the need arises for clinical assessment or treatment, either for the single parent or the children, she refers individuals to the North Shore Child Guidance Center. In this personalized outreach, the staff hope to reach individuals who otherwise may be either unaware of available mental health services or reluctant to use them.

An important service offered by SPAN is the monthly newsletter, which is edited by a single parent. The newsletter typically includes information about the upcoming community meeting, a book review, and a checklist of single-parent needs for which SPAN might provide assistance. Volunteers are sought in the newsletter, as are suggestions concerning how SPAN might be improved. Single parents who have attended any of the community meetings receive the monthly newsletter, which is currently sent out to over 100 single parents.

Although the type of direct services offered by SPAN will probably remain somewhat constant over time, the program is in a state of transition in that the social worker expects her role to change somewhat as single parent volunteers gradually take over some of the tasks she now performs. The social worker, however, has experienced some difficulty in recruiting volunteers to become directly involved in the program. She believes this may be due in part to the fact that single parents have little free time to devote to the program, and that many are so economically disadvantaged that they cannot afford to give time to the program.

In addition single parents are very needy people, especially immediately following a divorce, so, she believes, they are not in a position to make an easy transition from a "needer" to a "helper." Accordingly, the social worker believes that it is unrealistic to expect the single parents to conduct the program by themselves. The social worker is needed to provide continuity to the program, to act as a supervisor, and to be available when crisis intervention is needed.

The ego-involvement and group identification of participants in SPAN may determine the extent of their willingness to volunteer time to the program. For example, one single parent stated that she felt no commitment at all to the program until she was asked to be a member of the Advisory Council.

Indirect Services. Much of the content and goals of SPAN's indirect services have resulted from the previously mentioned study of single parents living in a nearby community and the helping networks available to them. This project involved interviews with single parents in various ethnic groups and support systems which, given single parents' ethnic or religious orientations, might be available to them. Single parent volunteers were trained by North Shore staff to conduct the interviews with the support systems (which included churches, synagogues, neighborhood associations, and specific ethnic clubs). The single parents were selected (from the support systems themselves and from among the acquaintances of volunteers) and interviewed by the project coordinator, who sought information about the supports that were available to them and the needs they had.

Findings included the fact that many single parents felt excluded from various groups simply because they were single parents. Some ethnic groups felt more deprived than others, and none felt wholly satisfied with the support network that was available to them. Resources which were believed to be most needed by single parents were community groups that would provide male figures to adolescent sons, counseling services, and topic-specific group discussions (e.g., separation, setting limits for children) which offered mutual support.

SPAN's indirect services consist primarily of educating the general community and disseminating information regarding the needs of single parents and their children. Targets for these education and dissemination efforts include schools, government agencies, interested civic leaders and other allied professionals. Professional workshops, pamphlets, other written material, and video tape presentations have been used to reach these audiences.

Plans are now underway to use professionals at the Center to train and to supervise lay staff involved in a variety of selp-help activities. Training sessions are being developed to enhance the skills of these "natural caregivers" in the areas of group work and human relations training. Additionally, staff plan to develop training packages in the areas of crisis intervention, child development, and communication skills. Staff also hope to provide consultation to a number of local agencies that provide services to single parents and their children.

Administration of Program

The entire program is administered by the social worker; the volunteers she has enlisted to assist her in coordinating the various activities of SPAN; and SPAN's Advisory Council, made up of two social workers, one secretary (a single parent volunteer), and two other single parent volunteers. The Council, which acts as SPAN's problem solver, is responsible for (1) editing, printing, and disseminating the monthly newsletter; (2) planning the topic and speaker for SPAN's monthly community meetings; and (3) planning other activities, such as picnics open to the single-parent family public or childcare services.

Cost. During its initial pilot year, SPAN received no funds from the North Shore Child Guidance Center, although the Center contributed the time of the social worker. Currently SPAN is being funded by the state of New York. Additionally, each participant is charged $30 to attend the ten self-help group sessions.

Monitoring and Evaluation

No formal monitoring or evaluation have been undertaken for this program. However, the needs of single parents have been carefully assessed in the support network study. Although the results of this study pointed out that single parents in certain ethnic groups feel they have fewer supports than others (particularly Blacks and Spanish-speaking individuals who are not affiliated with a particular church), efforts to reach these populations have been unsuccessful. The monthly newsletter provides a format in which single parents can express their needs and suggest ways SPAN can help them further. Recipients of the newsletter are also asked to express their opinions of SPAN. This information is collected only for purposes of planning. No analysis has yet been made for monitoring or evaluative purposes.

Replication

Since SPAN is a relatively new program and is still in the process of achieving its major goals, no replication plans have been made, nor are they considered feasible at this time. However, the social worker who coordinates the program cites a number of important considerations for successful replication. These include the following:

- A needs assessment that identifies the population is essential to gauge the most pressing concerns and problems of single parents.

- Outreach efforts are quite important throughout the existence of the program. They should begin at the needs assessment phase. The establishment of rapport with such agencies and programs will help later in setting up a referral network.

- Professional input is necessary at all stages of development for a program like SPAN. However, the role of the professional changes as the program develops. He or she must be willing and able to assist lay single parents in developing helper skills and in playing more significant roles as they develop these skills. Professional leadership is needed to train volunteers, provide educational input, and refer single parents or their children to clinical services if needed.

- Initial program activities should begin in a nonthreatening way. The community meeting is a good format since it brings single parents together and requests information from them in a non-intrusive manner.

- The assistance of lay single parents should be requested as early as possible. Volunteers can initially be responsible for many aspects of the program (such as setting up a referral and information center, writing and editing a newsletter, facilitating community meetings). Ultimately, the goal is to have single parents take more responsibility for the program.

- Child care service should be provided to free single parents to attend program activities.

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APPENDIX 10

Instruments

Established Measurement Instruments

The following selection of established instruments represents those which appear particularly amenable for use with divorced and remarried families.

FISHER DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE (FDAS)

The Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale developed by Bruce Fisher (1978) is a 100-item self-report instrument that assesses general personal adjustment to divorce. It contains the following five subscales: (1) self-worth; (2) disentanglement; (3) angerism; (4) grief; and (5) social trusting. Fisher reports an alpha (internal consistency) reliability of .98 for the FDAS total score. Reliabilities for the subscales range from .87 to .93. Because the FDAS is pragmatically based upon Dr. Fisher's experience in teaching divorce seminars, he claims the FDAS has good face validity. However, no empirical evidence of validity is reported. Normative scores for the total score and the five subscales have been developed and new normative scores for special comparison groups (e.g., male/female; recently separated/not recently separated) are currently being developed. An advantage to using this instrument is that it is divorce-specific. However, the scale is only applicable to adults.

Sample Items

"I can communicate with my former love-partner in a calm and rational manner."

"I feel capable of facing and dealing with my problems."

Reference

Fisher, B. When Your Relationship Ends, Boulder, Colorado: Family Relations Learning Center, 1978.

THE FAMILY COPING INVENTORY (FCI)

The Family Coping Inventory, developed by McCubbin, Boss, Wilson and Dahl (1979), is a self-report instrument in which respondents indicate how helpful 91 specific behaviors are to them in managing situational and developmental stressors. The specific behaviors represent the following five coping patterns identified in prior family coping studies: (1) Family Integrity; (2) Social Support; (3) Reducing Tension; (4) Maintaining an Optimistic Outlook; and (5) Self-Reliance and Esteem. Internal consistency alpha reliability is reported as .85.

Sample Items (The following are examples of coping behaviors listed in the instrument.)

"Allowing myself to become angry."

"Trying to be a father and a mother to the children."

Reference

McCubbin, H. I., Boss, P. G., Wilson, L. R., Dahl, B. B. The Family Coping Inventory, Unpublished research instrument, University of Minnesota, 1979.

STRAUS CONFLICT TACTICS SCALE (CTS)

Family conflict resolution styles are assessed with this scale. Three subscales indicating types of conflict resolution styles are measured: (1) Reasoning; (2) Verbal Aggression; and (3) Physical Aggression. The scale items refer to actions in each of these modalities that a family member has used when in conflict with another family member. The response categories are the number of times each action occurred during the past year ranging from "Never" (1) to "Very Often" (5).

An item analysis computing the correlation of the items with the total scale indicated an adequate level of internal consistency reliability (Straus, 1979). A principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed and produced three factors, each of which identified one of the three subscales (Straus, 1979). Straus (1979) also reports some evidence of construct validity insofar as the results of the CTS are in accord with previous empirical findings relaxed to the "catharsis" theory of aggression control, socially undesirable acts, inter-generational transmission of violent behavior, socio-economic status, conjugal power structure and relative resources.

Sample Items (The following are examples of conflict behaviors listed in the instrument.)

"Yelled and/or insulted."

"Threatened to hit or throw something at others."

Reference

Straus, M. A. "Measuring Intra-family Conflict and Violence: The Conflict Tactics (CT Scales." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 14, 75-88, 1979.

THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT SCALE (FES)

The Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Rudolph Moss (1974) is a 90-item true-false self-report instrument that measures and describes the family environment as perceived by each family member. The scale is composed of three main dimensions (Relationship, Personal Growth, and System Maintenance) and has ten established subscales (Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict, Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation, Moral-Religious Emphasis, Organization and Control).

Several psychometric criteria of test construction have been estimated for the FES. The ten subscales have adequate internal consistency reliability, eight-week test-retest reliability, and item to subscale correlations. In addition, average subscale intercorrelations were found to be around .20, indicating that the subscales measure distinct, though somewhat relaxed, aspects of family social environments. Some evidence of discriminative validity exists for the FES insofar as psychiatrically disturbed families could be significantly discriminated from matched "normal" families on the scale scores (Moos, 1976).

Sample Items

"Family members often keep their feelings to themselves."

"Family members strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights."

Reference

Moos, R. Family, Work, and Group Environment Scales Manual, Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1974.

Moos, R. and Moos, B. "A Typology of Family Social Environments," *Family Process*, 1976, *15*, 357-371.

279

POST SEPARATION/POST DIVORCE PROBLEMS AND STRESS SCALE

The Post Separation/Post Divorce Problems and Stress Scale developed by Helen Raschke (1978) is a 59-item self-report scale for separated/divorced adults and parents. It contains 10 major dimensions: (1) Perceived Unpleasant Emotional States; (2) Occupational Ability and Satisfaction; (3) Relations with Former Spouse; (4) Dating Status; (5) Ability with Children and Home; (6) Goode's Trauma Items; (7) Interaction in New Roles; (8) Satisfaction with Children; (9) Withdrawal and Guilt Tendencies; and (10) Satisfaction and Ability in New Roles with Friends and People in Jobs and Organizations.

Internal Consistency Reliability Coefficients for the ten dimension subscales range from .41 to .90, with most of the subscales being near or above .60. The total scale internal consistency reliability is reported as .66.

Raschke reports face validity of the scale as indicated by the judgments of hundreds of separated and divorced persons in "We Care" groups. There is also some evidence of concurrent validity and construct validity when the Raschke Stress Scales were compared to measures of trauma, self-esteem, and ease of role transition.

Sample Items

"Compared to before the separation, are you now more or less able to fulfill or deal with your current responsibilities for your children?"
"Compared to before the separation, how well are you able to handle the children?"

Reference

Raschke, H. J. "The Development of a Post-Separation/Post-Divorce Problems and Stress Scale." Paper presented at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Meeting, October, 1978, Philadelphia, PA.

THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION INVENTORY (PACI)

The PACI is a 40-item self-report instrument designed to help counselors, educators, and researchers assess parent-adolescent relations. Its developer, Millard Bienvenu, Sr. (1969), claims that it can be used for both clinical diagnosis as well as evaluation. It can be administered to children 13 years and older. Although it is best suited for families with two parental figures (natural, adoptive, step-parent), it can be used with single parent families.

Three reliability studies have been conducted using the PACI. The split-half reliability coefficient for the total instrument was reported as .86. Test-retest reliability was reported as .78 for a three-week period. A second test-retest reliability study reported a coefficient of .88.

Bienvenu also reports that the PACI has evidence of construct and concurrent validity as it was able to discriminate between groups of delinquents and non-delinquents and groups of honor and remedial students.

Sample Items

"Do you pretend you are listening to him/her when actually you have tuned him/her out?"

"Do you ever laugh at your son/daughter or make fun of him/her?"

Reference

Bienvenu, Millard J., Sr. *A Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory*. Durham, North Carolina: Family Life Publications, Inc. 1969.

Regardless of whether the instrument chosen was developed specifically for your program evaluation or was an estabished instrument, it is best to administer more than one instrument. An interview or questionnaire could be developed that includes both new program-specific questions as well as existing scales.

Psychometric Properties: Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability of a score to consistently measure a characteristic or trait. It is the *accuracy* of a measuring instrument. If any structured instrument is reliable, one should obtain the same results time after time and all items within a given instrument should consistently measure the same characteristic.

The three most common methods of estimating reliability include the following: (1) test-retest; (2) split-half; and (3) equivalent forms. Test-retest reliability is established by correlating the scores on the same instrument given on two different occasions. Split-half reliability is measured by correlating the scores on two halves of the same instrument given on a single occasion. Equivalent form reliability is established by correlating the scores of equivalent forms of the same instrument given on a single occasion.

Test-retest reliability measures *temporal* consistency or *stability* of the scores over time, whereas split-half and equivalent form reliability measures the *internal* consistency of an instrument which means that all the items on a given instrument measure the same characteristic in the same way.

Validity

Validity is the ability of an instrument to actually measure those characteristics that it is supposed to measure. It is an indication of the *usefulness* of a particular instrument for a given purpose. Validity is generally expressed as the correlation between the score from the instrument and some independent criterion. Therefore, the validity of an instrument is judged by the extent to which the results are compatible with other relevant variables. The five major types of validity include the following: (1) predictive validity; (2) concurrent validity; (3) content validity; (4) construct validity; and (5) face validity. Predictive validity refers to the ability of an instrument to predict some *future* criterion. Concurrent validity is the ability of an instrument to estimate some *present* criterion. Content validity is the *representativeness* of the items in a given instrument with regard to the total domain of the characteristic being measured. Construct validity assesses whether the instrument really measures the "construct"--i.e., the set of observations related to one's theoretical framework. Finally, face validity is a subjective evaluation that the instrument appears to measure a given characteristic.

Because it generally requires a great deal of research effort to demonstrate the reliability and validity of a given instrument, few instruments actually demonstrate all the types identified above. Nevertheless, when choosing an established measuring instrument, one should consider not only its relevance to specific program efforts and objectives but should also obtain available information regarding reliability and validity from the author of the instrument.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire*

For each question listed below, please circle the appropriate answer.

A. How do you feel about the location of this agency in getting there for services?

1) very unsatisfied
2) not satisfied
3) no particular feelings one way or the other
4) satisfactory
5) very satisfactory

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments here.

B. How were you personally treated by the receptionists and clerks?

1) very unsatisfactorily
2) not satisfactorily
3) no particular feelings one way or the other
4) satisfactorily
5) very satisfactorily

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments here.

C. How do you feel about the length of time before our agency dealt with your particular situation/problem(s) after you first contacted? (Be sure you consider the urgency of your concerns.)

1) very unsatisfied
2) not satisfied
3) no particular feelings one way or the other
4) satisfied
5) very satisfied

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments here.

---

*Adapted from Mental Health-Mental Rehabilitation Area Program, Hennepin County, 527 Park Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415.

D. How do you feel your situation/problem(s) has changed since you have become involved with this agency?

1) become much worse
2) become somewhat worse
3) better in some ways but worse in others
4) become somewhat better
5) become much better

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments here.

____

____

E. How do you feel about the helpfulness of the primary staff who dealt with your situation/problem(s)?

1) very satisfied
2) not satisfied
3) no particular feelings one way or the other
4) satisfied
5) very satisfied

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments here.

____

____

F. If a friend asked, would you recommend the services of this agency?

1) never recommend
2) hardly ever recommend
3) usually recommend
4) almost always recommend
5) always recommend

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments below.

____

____

G. If needed, would you come back or contact us again?

1) never come back or contact
2) hardly ever come back or contact
3) usually come back or contact
4) almost always come back or contact
5) always come back or contact

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments below.

____

____

H. In general, what do you think of the overall service that you received?

1) very unsatisfied
2) not satisfied
3) no particular feelings one way or the other
4) satisfied
5) very satisfied

If you have circled #1 or #2 please make comments below.

____

____

I. Who filled out this questionnaire?

1) father
2) stepfather
3) mother
4) stepmother
5) male child
6) female child

SAMPLE GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

FOR SEPARATED/DIVORCED PARENTS

Your name____ Date__________________

Birthdate___________________ Age______________

Address____

____

Telephone Number________________________

Sex Male____ Female____

Race/Ethnic Group_____________________________

Highest Level of Formal Education Completed_______________________________

Present Occupation____

Present Marital Status____

How long has this been your marital status?________________________________

Present Living Arrangement____

How many children do you have?____

What are the ages of the children? ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Do you currently have custody of the children?_____________________________

Does the non-custodial parent have visitation privileges?__________________

How often do the children see the non-custodial parent?____________________

____

Have there been custody problems?____

Have there been visitation problems?_____________________________________

What is the major reason for seeking help and information at this time?____

____

How do you want things to be different as a result of this program?_______

____

Who referred you to this program?____

Are you currently in counseling? If yes, briefly describe._______________

____

____

Are any of your children currently in counseling? If yes, briefly describe.

____

____

____

-To be Completed by Interviewer-

SAMPLE GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF SEPARATION/DIVORCE

Name ______________________ Today's Date ____________

Birthdate ______________________ Age ________

Address ______________________________

____

Telephone Number ______________________

Sex Male _____ Female _____

Race/Ethnic Group ______________________

Highest Level of Education Completed ______________________

Who does the child live with? ______________________

Is there visitation with the non-custodial parent? ______________________

How often does the child see the non-custodial parent? ______________________

Is the child's satisfied with living and visitation arrangements? ________

____

What is the child's stated major reason for coming to the program? ______

____

What does the child want to be different as a result of the program? _____

____

Who referred the child to the program? ______________________

____

Are parent(s) currently involved in a similar program? ______________

____

Which parent? ______________________________

Is child in treatment for any emotional, psychological problem? If yes, briefly describe ______________________

____

____

Does the child seem appropriate for the program? ______________

____

If not, please explain ______________________

____

____

SAMPLE GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM
FOR REMARRIED PARENTS

Your name ______________________ Today's Date ____________

Birthdate ______________________ Age ________

Address ____

____

Telephone Number ______________________________

Sex Male ____ Female ____

Race/Ethnic Group ____________________

Highest Level of Formal Education Completed ____________________

Present Occupation ______________________________

Present Marital Status ______________________________

How long has this been your marital status? ____________________

Present Living Arrangement ______________________________

____

Do you have children from your previous marriage(s)? ______________

If yes, how many? ____________

What are the ages of these children? ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Do you currently have custody of these children? ______________

Does the non-custodial parent have visitation privileges? ____________

How often do the children see the non-custodial parent? ____________

____

Have there been custody problems? ______________________________

Have there been visitation problems? ______________________________

Do you have step-children from your present marriage? ______________

If yes, how many? ______

What are the ages of the stepchildren? ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Do you currently live with the stepchildren? ______________

Does the non-custodial parent have visitation privileges? ____________

How often do the children see the non-custodial parent? ____________

____

Have there been custody problems? ______________________________

Have there been visitation problems? ______________________________

What is the major reasons for seeking help and information at this time?

____

____

How do you want things to be different as a result of this program? ______

____

____

Who referred you to this program?_______________________________________

Are you currently in counseling? If yes, briefly describe.______________

____

Are any of your children or stepchildren currently in counseling? If yes, briefly describe.____

____

____

-To be completed by Interviewer-

SAMPLE GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM
CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF REMARRIAGE

Name__________________________ Today's Date________________

Birthdate__________________________ Age__________

Address____

____

Telephone Number______________________________________

Sex Male____ Female____

Race/Ethnic Group______________________

Highest Level of Education Completed__________________________

Who does the child live with?________________________________

Is there visitation with the non-custodial parent?________________

____

Is the child satisfied with the living and visitation arrangement?______

Is the custodial parent remarried?____________________________

If yes, are there step-siblings?______________

If yes, how many?____________

What are the ages of these step-siblings? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

Is the non-custodial parent remarried?__________

If yes, are there step-siblings?______________

If yes, how many?____________

What are the ages of these step-siblings? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

What is the child's stated reason for coming to the program?__________

____

____

Who referred the child to the program?__________________________

____

Are the child's parents involved in a similar program?______________

____

If yes, which parent(s)?______________________________________

Is the child in treatment for any emotional or psychological problem? If yes, briefly describe ______________________________

____

____

Does the child seem appropriate for the program?______________________________

____

If not, please explain____

____

____

APPENDIX 11

Programs Visited

Divorce and Mourning Project
Mill Valley Community Mental Health Center
333 Miller Street
Mill Valley, CA 94941
Contact: Jane Palches, Director

The Bridge
Metro Atlanta Mediation Center
848 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30308
Contact: Wendy-Palmer Sachs, Director

The Menninger Clinic
Community Service Office
234 Kansas Avenue
Topeka, KS 66603
Contact: Alvin Green, M.S.W.

Divorced Kids Group
Lexington High School
Lexington, MA 02173
Contact: Howard Schofield
E Unit Counselor

Remarriage Consultation Service
New York, NY 10019
Contact: Dr. Clifford J. Sager, Director

Families in Transition Project
258 Alexander Street
Rochester, NY 14607
Contact: Keith Elliot

School-Based Groups for Children of Divorce
Department of Special Education
59 Scotland Road
South Orange, NY 07079
Contact: Elizabeth Haggerty

Kids in the Middle
8029 Forsyth Blvd., Suite 203
Clayton, MO 63105
Contact: Ms. Kim Long

Divorce and Marital Stress Clinic
1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite B2-6
Arlingotn, VA 22209
Contact: Emily M. Brown

Family Change Project
Marcy-Holmes Open School
711 11th Avenue, Southeast
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Contact: Shirley Haldhal, Coordinator

Center for Children in Family Crisis
414 Investment Building
239 Fourth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Contact: Karen Miyares

Single Parent Action Network
1495 Northern Boulevard
Manhasset, NY 11030
Contact: Ms. Ronnie Crane

Children of Divorce
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802
Contact: Dr. Louise Guerney
Assoc. Professor of
Human Development

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